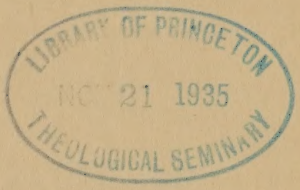
PAUL'S SECRET OF POWER

ROLLIN H. WALKER



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ROLLIN H. WALKER

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PAUL'S SECRET OF POWER

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PREFACE

WHATEVER one may think of Paul's manner of phrasing the gospel, one thing is certain—he had a perfect psychological technique for putting himself at the disposal of the redeeming and vitalizing powers that came into the world through Jesus Christ, and, in spite of his somewhat involved style in treating certain matters, he reveals this technique with the utmost simplicity and clearness. That he possessed a great and vital secret is shown by his amazing career, and by the fact that all through the ages the fires of reformation and revival have been lighted at his altar. We would fain state in modern language and in the simplest possible way his technique for vital living. In doing so the writer is aware that he will run agog of much popular thought, for Paul's overwhelmed consciousness that in all things the initiative is with God is too awestruck and reverent to find favor with an age that has been obsessed with the confidence that if it could only get hold of the right technique, it could save itself by autosuggestion. However, there are not a few who have come to the conclusion that building a tower of Babel is possibly not the best way to reach heaven, and to them a fresh survey of the method which succeeded so gloriously with the apostle may not be without interest.

I wish to thank my colleagues, Professors George W. Hollister and Goldie McCue, and my friend, the Rev. F. Olin Stockwell, of China, for reading the

proofs; and especially my ever alert and discriminating secretary, Miss Estella Hutchisson, for many suggestions and corrections in the preparation of the manuscript.

ROLLIN H. WALKER.

INTRODUCTION

The Return to Paul

Some years ago the writer, while waiting in a German railroad station, found on the newsstand a pamphlet with a picturesque cover. It represented a mailed hand choking a serpent, and the title was "Back to Jesus! Away with Paul!" A generation ago it was fashionable thus to speak of Paul as a man who obscured the face of the historic Jesus. Men said, "Let us dispense with Paul and go back to Matthew, Mark, and Luke, where we can see Jesus as he really was."

But scientific criticism has shown that it is difficult to distinguish between the actual words of Jesus and the interpretations that were added to them before they were written down. We have realized that during the years when men carried about with them the gospel as an oral tradition, the constant experiences that were coming to them as the result of believing and following Jesus unconsciously colored their report of what he said. The Spirit was teaching them the deeper significance of his message. As Professor Frederick C. Grant has recently remarked, the Gospels are like geological strata. The upper layers can be separated, but when we get down deeper to the earlier formations, the action of heat has utterly obscured the stratification. And so it is with the Gospels. In the earliest documents we cannot distinguish between the precise words of Jesus and those thoughts which these words like a

flowering bulb caused to sprout forth in the minds of his disciples. And it is not important that we should do so, for inevitable developments in that wondrous spiritual springtime are as much a revelation of the mind of Christ as his precise original words.

Furthermore, we have come to realize that the first three Gospels raise a host of questions and give us by their dynamic vitality a commanding impulse to answer them. And when we obey this impulse, we find to our surprise that the structure of thought we erect is very similar to that which Paul built. The only difference is in our phraseology, figures of speech, and the pattern of the front door. If we shrink from obeying the impulse to carry the words of Jesus out to their logical conclusion, we find that the gospel in our minds is like a vigorous plant that needs repotting. Our refusal stunts the vitality both of our thought and our experience. If the first three Gospels are to be as helpful to men who never saw Jesus as were the spoken words of Jesus to his first disciples, one must think of him as a living Presence and the representative of the power and grace of God in the world. Both his life and his death must have a cosmic significance. And that, of course, is precisely the way in which Paul thought of him.

Paul Had Found the Secret of Perennial Vitality

But this is not the only reason for the return to Paul. After all the repudiation of his theology by men, the fact remained that the great apostle had learned some wonderful secret of life and power which his repudiators plainly did not possess. This has led them to search-

ings of heart, as, indeed, it would lead any honest man who contemplated with open eyes the career of the apostle. Only the most complacent critic could remain self-satisfied in the presence of the record of the physical hardships which were overcome by his indomitable spirit: "Five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day have I been in the deep; in journeyings often, in perils of rivers, in perils of robbers, in perils from my countrymen, . . . in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in labor and travail, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness."

Our wonder grows when we remember that these sufferings were endured by a man with a thorn in the flesh. And, best of all, Paul had the power to communicate his vibrant life to others. A distaste for Paul's theology certainly ought not to deter anyone from the search for the secret of his power.

To Go Back to Paul Is Not to Repudiate the Achievements of Modern Thought

To acknowledge that Paul had a secret of vital living which is unknown to many who think they have outgrown him, is in no sense to repudiate much that they have accomplished by the application of modern scientific methods to religious problems. If someone had not fought a victorious battle for the right of the human mind to examine the Scripture records with the same critical thoroughness that is applied to all other

sources of history, we should now be in the same condition that exists in Roman Catholic countries, where the overwhelming mass of the intelligentsia repudiate the church. But there is such a thing as winning a just and glorious victory and having nothing with which to feed the people after the war is over. There is also such a thing as holding to a nobly achieved result in religious thinking and yet at the same time having no adequate gospel for the new day.

All through history we see movements that have been raised up by God which, after fighting their good fight, have degenerated into obstacles on the path of progress. Pharisaism, for instance, was in the beginning a heroic protest against the efforts of Antiochus Epiphanes to force Hellenic paganism upon the Jews. With the courage of martyrs they fought and gained their victory; but after the battle was over they developed such a fanatical opposition to progress that, instead of shedding their blood for the religion of their fathers, they actually shed the blood of the Messiah sent by God to redeem them.

In like manner Protestantism was a heroic protest against ecclesiastical tyranny and corruption in the church, but it soon hardened into a cantankerous individualism whose warring sects could not work together in opposing evil or spreading the gospel.

We have seen in our own generation a strong organization used of God to outlaw the saloon from a great nation, but so failing to adjust itself to the changing phases of the temperance battle that it was no longer an efficient instrument for fighting alcoholism.

Liberal Christianity—and what is called modernism —finds itself in precisely the same condition. It is woefully deficient in the power to grip the conscience and to communicate spiritual passion.

It is that power to grip the conscience for which we are now all so wistful. And naturally we turn to those men who, whether conservative or radical, plainly worked under the afflatus of a divine re-enforcement, and were used to accomplish great things for the Kingdom. The most outstanding of these is Paul.

We Are Not Slavishly to Imitate Paul, But to Learn His Secret

The purpose of this book is to study Paul's interpretation of Christ in search of the secret of vitality which enabled him not only to be a conqueror in his own life, but to be a marvelous source of helpfulness to mankind. One would isolate the germ of his vitality.

To learn from Paul is the more important because our problem is so similar to his. It was his business to translate the teachings of our Lord spoken to Jewish peasants in Palestine into forms intelligible to the pagan populations of the Roman Empire whose background was quite different from that of the Jews. It is likewise our task to translate the gospel which our fathers unquestioningly accepted into the thought forms of a new generation that calls in question everything they taught us.

We go back not to be enslaved by this first-century apostle. He himself was the most daring modernist of his day, and he would repudiate our imitation. Our

desire is to be enfranchised, to learn his freedom in the use of the gospel principles, and, if possible, to get from him some kind of a serum by which we may inoculate ourselves with his extraordinary power over the body.

The best contribution this book can make is to the man who does not like to have his theology fed to him predigested, but wishes a guide that will bring him face to face with the Pauline material and help him to make up his mind for himself. The Questionnaire at the end of this volume is a work sheet for such an eager and inquiring mind. It has been tested out many times and is a thoroughly workable plan. The questions are not too difficult nor too technical, but bring the student in immediate contact with Paul himself, and with the fundamental problems of his teaching. There are almost no exact references to the Pauline material. The student is directed to a chapter or section of a book and asked to find and identify the answer for himself. This gives zest to the work, and one feels that no conclusions are being forced upon him.

I myself might have confidence even in the flesh: . . . circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; as touching zeal, persecuting the church; as touching the righteousness which is in the law, found blameless.—*Philippians 3. 4-6.*

And Paul said, But I am a Roman born.—*Acts 22. 28.*

And he [the chief captain] said, Dost thou know Greek? . . . But Paul said, I am a Jew, of Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city.—*Acts 21. 37, 38.*

I

UTILIZING THE ADVANTAGES OF A PROVIDENTIAL BACKGROUND

Heredity and Environment Combined to Make Paul an Apostle

PAUL tells us that from birth God designed him to be an apostle (Galatians 1. 15). He came into the world endowed with a body and a mind that impelled him to pioneering tasks, and he did not suppress his adventurous impulses. Campbell, in his biography of David Livingstone, says that Mr. Livingstone would never have been happy settled down to the routine of a mission station in Africa. He was made for an explorer. So Paul was made for an explorer in another realm.

Moreover, the birthplace of Paul was providential. Tarsus was a seaport to which came ships from all parts of the world. The boy Paul as he went down to the harbor would talk with seamen from the ends of the earth. He had the map of the known world printed on his imagination in his early youth. And growing up in this Greek city he learned to speak the language that was understood throughout the Roman Empire.

A Devout Home Furnished Religious Training

Another enormous advantage that Paul had was his training in a devout Jewish home. What he says of

Timothy was doubtless true of himself, that from a babe he knew the Holy Scriptures. His mind was literally saturated with the Old Testament. The Scripture was to him like the steel rods in a concrete building; it gave him an ethical re-enforcement that kept him from the vices of youth.

Paul's father must have had real enthusiasm for the law, seeing that he sent his son on the long journey up to Jerusalem, where he put him under the tutelage of the famous rabbi Gamaliel. Thus he received an intellectual background that made it possible for him, in time, to see Jesus as the flowering out of all that had been best and noblest in the aspirations of the Jewish people.

Often as we ride across the country we see a sign bearing the name of the state in which we are traveling, and under it "U. S." That means that the road is not merely a state road, but a national highway. Paul's profound knowledge of the whole stretch of Hebrew literature enabled him finally to see that in following Jesus he was traveling not merely a first-century highway, but one that had been laid out by Divine Providence through all the centuries preceding. This consciousness gave both to him and to his hearers a new courage to accept the great evangel.

Paul's Knowledge of the Scripture Furnished Apt Symbols for His New Gospel

Paul's realization that the evangel of Jesus was the flowering out of the Old Testament not merely tended to beget confidence in his message, but it also revealed

to him picturesque and beautiful material for Christian teaching. The coloring of the new picture which he was commissioned to paint was enriched by the stories of the Old Testament which he used as illustrations. In time the biblical stories and the biblical phraseology became a kind of circulating medium for the gospel. One of the hindrances in conveying religious truth today arises from the gross popular ignorance of the Bible and the consequent lack of a spiritual currency.

Moreover, Paul's constant contact with the utter sincerity and simplicity of the Scriptures made him instinctively revolt against the pretentious affectations of the philosophers of his day, and brought it about that his teaching has come down to us chemically pure of the least artificiality. In the presence of such literary models as he had in the Old Testament all strut and insincerity of style became repulsive.

Paul's Cosmopolitan Background Saved Him From Provincial Extremes

Paul was thus prepared to sympathize profoundly with the Jewish point of view, and also to understand the Roman world to which he was sent. His education made him a debtor both to Jews and to Greeks. If he had been less firmly grounded in the austere puritan religion of Moses and the prophets, he would have been almost sure to compromise disastrously with the Greek standards. If he had not had his early environment in a Greek city, he would have been tempted to impose upon the Gentiles Jewish national customs that would have repelled them and thwarted the progress of the

gospel. As it was he succeeded in keeping the golden mean. He proclaimed a gospel that, without being narrowly Jewish, held up the strictest moral ideals.

Paul Rigorously Applied the Code He Inherited

Paul was not the type that takes the color of the crowd. He tells us that he advanced in the Jews' religion beyond many of his countrymen, being exceedingly zealous for the traditions of his fathers. If his youthful Jewish companions mocked this attitude, as they doubtless did, Paul was not disturbed. He did his own thinking, made his own program, and vigorously carried out whatever he claimed to believe.

Paul saw, for instance, that Christianity was in spirit opposed to the rabbinical system in which he was brought up, a system that stressed with punctilious scrupulosity every precept of the law. Hence Paul not only opposed Christianity, but when the Christians were driven out of Jerusalem, he followed them to foreign countries as a missionary of persecution. By his thoroughgoing consistency he proved to himself that his inherited way of salvation, through the mechanical and minute observance of every precept of the ceremonial and moral law, was not a way that brought either peace or power. Most of the rabbis in time gave up the hard struggle to observe the minutiae of the law, and lapsed into insincerity. But Paul proposed to carry out his religion to the bitter end. And the results compelled him to exclaim, "That which I do I know not: for not what I would, that do I practice; but what I hate, that I do. . . . For I delight in the law of God

after the inward man: but I see a different law in my members warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity under the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me out of the body of this death?" (Romans 7. 15, 22-24.) In a word, Paul found that his way of salvation would not work.

Too much cannot be made of the importance for Paul's future efficiency of this drastic and thoroughgoing experiment with his ancestral faith. It prepared him for that final flash of illumination which, like the flail and fan of God, separated the wheat from the chaff. It is interesting to note that Martin Luther and John Wesley both had the same experience of a most painful and punctilious carrying out of the legalistic religion which they inherited, followed, as in the case of Paul, with a great illumination and a great freedom from bondage.

There are two ways of being progressive in one's attitude toward his ancestral religion. One way, which unfortunately is in vogue at the present time, is to assume that the critics of the religion of our fathers must be in the right, and to take up with whatever comes along, professing to lead us out of the superstitions we have inherited. The other is to assume that perhaps the unsatisfactory aspects of our hereditary religion are due to the halfheartedness of its followers, or to our own superficial knowledge of its meaning, and in the name of progress to study it more deeply and carry it out more thoroughly than our fathers did, and thus to test its power to transform life.

One is moved to pause at this point. A man is not under obligation necessarily to adopt the religion of his fathers if he is in the presence of another religion whose followers exhibit a more exalted type of character than he sees among his own people; but in the absence of that he ought to make his ancestral religion Experiment No. 1 in the series of laboratory tests which he proposes to make. He should at least find whether the fault lies with the religion or with the people who practice it. This experimental method quickly demonstrates the elements that are unworkable in our hereditary faith, but it also makes manifest all that is good. Thus in our progress we cast aside only the error and keep the good. The great tragedy of history is that men when they see a new light are apt to discard not merely the old errors but the old values. Paul, as the result of his drastic experiment, kept all that was good in his fathers' religion and cast aside only the evil.

What a tragedy it would have been for Christianity if Paul in his rejection of the legalistic elements of the old priestly religion of the Jews had also discounted the values of the prophets and the Psalms! It was some point such as this that Jesus was stressing when he said, "Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven." The only true progressives are those who at the same time conserve all the values that have come down from the past.

The old prophet announced that the servant of Jehovah when he came would not quench the smoking

flax. By that he meant, among other things, that when religion was burning low he would not stamp out the fire from the wick because it made an evil odor, but, rather, he would pour in more oil. Alas, it is the fashion today to ascribe all the faults to the wick!

In a sense we may say Paul discovered the truth of Christianity by the scientific method, for he probably made the most thoroughgoing experiment with Judaism that was ever made, and thus proved to the full its value, but at the same time demonstrated its ineffectualness as a complete way of life. The alternative to which he was thus led was Christianity, a religion that conserved all the values of the Old Testament while it led men out into new realms of peace and power.

I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me.—*Isaiah 45. 4.*

But when it was the good pleasure of God, who separated me, even from my mother's womb, and called me through his grace, to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the Gentiles; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood.—*Galatians 1. 15, 16.*

II

POWER THROUGH RESPONDING TO THE DIVINE REVELATION

There Is No Technique for Saving Oneself

If one of Paul's disciples had told him that he was going to write a book on his technique for self-mastery, one can imagine that the apostle would have exclaimed: "Technique! Technique does not bring self-mastery. I had an elaborate technique before I was converted. We Jews thought if we kept the law perfectly for a day, something would click, and the Kingdom would come. I fasted and prayed, and kept every detail of the law; and where did it land me? In moral failure! Outwardly I was good enough, but inwardly I was continually forced to exclaim, 'O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?' Nay, worse than that; look at me holding the clothes of the witnesses as they stoned Stephen the blessed martyr to death, and then in my mad zeal going to Damascus for more victims! But, thank God! the Lord took a hand, and in mercy Jesus appeared to me. I did not work myself up to salvation. God in infinite pity saved me. You better write a book on God's technique in saving sinners. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works which God hath foreordained that we should walk in them."

Every man who has had a deep experience of God

feels just as Paul did. The outward phenomena of conversion are very different, but when a man is born from above, he is always brought to feel that his previous method of trying to make himself worthy of God has been a failure. He has been compelled to call for God's service station to come and haul him in. It is only after men have been lamed like Jacob in their ineffectual wrestling with the angel of the Lord that they are capable of receiving his blessing.

In the epistle to the Romans (1-3) Paul declares that this failure of mankind to save themselves by the methods which they have so carefully worked out, is a universal experience. Both Jews and Greeks, in spite of all their religious performances, he says, are under sin. Man's self-confident attempt to climb up to heaven on a ladder of his own making has been a failure.

Christ appeared to Paul in the midst of his persecuting fury. It was not an idea about Christ that came to him; it was Christ himself. Many times before his conversion Christ had come to Paul. He came to him in the person of Stephen when his face did shine as an angel. He came in Stephen's last cry, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." He came whenever a Christian who had been dragged into court fearlessly faced his murderous accusers and witnessed to the power of Christ. The Damascus road vision was only the consummation that finally broke through the barriers of his mind.

The arresting vision is a picturesque and vivid symbol of what in less dramatic ways happens in the experience of every man who finds God. God always first

finds him. The parable of the lost sheep is forever being enacted in the case of every child of God who has wandered away and has been found. Indeed, Paul believed that God is exhausting divine ingenuity for the salvation of each one of his children, and all that is needed on their part is to respond to his initiative and to believe in his goodness. This goodness surrounds us like an atmosphere. We only need to breathe it in. "The word is nigh thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach." (Romans 10. 8.)

There Is a Technique of Being Saved

But someone says: "Where, then, is the technique of which you propose to speak? There is no technique in being found, no technique in being rescued by the grace of God."

But can we be certain of this? Is there not a technique of being rescued from drowning? Many a person whom someone was seeking to save has not only drowned himself but drowned his rescuer, because he did not know enough to put his hand on his rescuer's shoulder, rather than grasp him convulsively about the neck. So it is in our attitudes toward the efforts of God to save us. We are like the Jews that Paul describes who, "going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God." Thousands thus fail of the peace of God because they have not learned to submit to his method of saving them. They are forever jerking themselves out of the hands of the Great Physician.

They will not be still and trust themselves fully to his grace.

Passive Submission to God Always Accompanied by Energetic but Restful Activity

When we say that a man is to be still and passively submit himself to the Great Physician, we are on the verge of one of those paradoxes that are so common in Paul. Being still in the hands of God often implies the greatest activity on our part, but it is activity in response to God's initiative. God will always be the pitcher in this game of life, but that does not mean that we must not bat the ball and run the bases. And yet there is something restful in activity which God begins. When we allow him to start things, and act only in obedience to his command, the strain is taken out of life. We shall put forth great energy, but it will not tear us to pieces, and we shall have the joy of knowing that we are not beating the air, but are accomplishing that whereunto we were called (1 Corinthians 9. 26).

God's Initiative Often Unrecognized

This divine initiative is by no means always recognized by us. We are taught that God comes to us in many ways, and often he comes incognito. When the blind man was asked who had opened his eyes, he could only answer, "A man called Jesus made clay and anointed mine eyes." He knew his name, but nothing more. When the lame man at the pool of Bethesda was asked who it was that had healed him, he said, "I

know not"—for Jesus had conveyed himself away. In that case the healed man did not even know the name of his benefactor. The blind man had merely responded to a kindly voice, the lame man to a sympathetic look, but they both responded. This need of response to Christ in whatever half-understood form he comes to us, is central in Paul's technique, as it must be today in all efforts to enter into an experience of power and peace.

Obedience to Any Divine Impulse Always Brings More Light and Life

To get a new revelation of God a man must turn back and obey whatever revelation of God has come to him in times past. That is what John the Baptist and Jesus meant when they began their work by a call to repentance. They meant, Turn about and obey the truth that you now know. The reason why God is unreal to so many is that they are doing nothing about the revelation they have already received.

Again, Paul after his conversion at once put every talent of truth and experience to the exchangers, and hence his experience and insight were constantly enlarged. He always struck at every ball that Providence pitched over the plate. He says, "I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision." Immediately in the synagogue he spake boldly, declaring that Jesus was the Son of God. He identified himself with the Christian group, learned the lessons they could teach him, and thus began that enormous widening of his horizon that gave us finally the great apostle to the Gentiles.

Doubtless Paul had many questions asked him during those first few weeks at Damascus which he could not answer. And these questions, and the deep heart-searchings which they brought about, drove him into seclusion. There on the anvil of hard thinking, like Jesus in the wilderness, he hammered his new experience into more clear-cut conceptions. From the beginning Paul led a sacrificial life not merely in the physical sense, but also in the intellectual sense. He presented his mind, a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God. And the result of this terrific concentration we have in the packed pages of his letters.

This retreat of Paul into Arabia after his Damascus vision is not sufficiently stressed as an important part of the explanation of his power.[1] He never could have accomplished his great work with the modern type of jellyfish theology, made up of good intentions and fine feelings. And one of Paul's special lessons to this age is his challenge to more profound and clear-cut thinking about God and the way of salvation. Some of our greatest prophets are now saying that a revival of close thinking on the fundamental assumptions of our religion is one of the two supreme needs of the hour, the other being, of course, the reconstruction of our economic order in harmony with the Sermon on the Mount. One can scarcely be accomplished without the other.

[1] The writer is aware that, as Professor Findlay in his stimulating book, *A Portrait of Paul*, insists, there is no direct statement that Paul's trip into Arabia was, like Jesus' flight to the wilderness, a retreat for prayer and meditation; but I deem it to have been so because, before so great a career, some such retreat was a psychological necessity.

Paul's Temptation in the Wilderness

A young student has suggested to the writer another aspect of this retirement into Arabia. It was not merely a time of quiet meditation, but, as in the case of Jesus in the wilderness, it must have been a time of fierce temptation. The details of Paul's fight, of course, we do not know, but we can be sure that one temptation was the decision as to whether he should devote his life as an aggressive missionary for Christ. The majority of the Christians were called to confess Christ and endure a certain amount of ostracism and persecution, but for the most part they went on with their ordinary avocations and lived a quiet life. Should Paul do this, or should he cut himself loose and engage in the hazardous and extremely self-sacrificing task of a militant missionary for Christ? We can see the sweat stand on his brow as he fights this question out to the finish, and determines to take the steep and thorny path.

Another temptation which doubtless was strong and subtle was to pose as an especially orthodox Jew, and thus show that becoming a Christian did not in the least tend to break down a man's zeal for the law. This was an extremely plausible proposition, and had back of it the enormous weight of great sections of that Holy Book which Paul deemed to be the perfect expression of the will of God. It was Stephen's modernism, as illustrated in his speech and his general attitude, that had infuriated Paul himself against the martyr. Why should he not eschew such irritating attitudes and show

that a Christian could be even more zealous for the law after his conversion than before?

On the other hand, Paul, from his knowledge of the Greek world, well knew that a Christianity which insisted upon adopting the Jewish rules and precepts, was a Christianity that would make little headway among them. All his ancestral orthodox instincts revolted against looseness concerning the law, but the great new tide of life that surged into his soul said, "Stress love, and let the rites and the ritual go." This again was a fierce fight, and was made fiercer by the fact that Paul knew that if he took the position that a Gentile needed merely to believe in Christ and then begin to love with all his heart, he would isolate himself not merely from his former associates, but from the new brotherhood into which he had been introduced by baptism, for most of them were still zealous for the law. How terrible the fight must have been we can scarcely realize.

We are not contending that Paul came back from Arabia with all his program defined and all his new theology clear-cut, but he did make decisions there that practically settled it that when he got down to the practical work of evangelizing the heathen he would go the whole length.

The very God! think, Abib; dost thou think?
So, the All-Great, were the All-Loving too—
So, through the thunder comes a human voice
Saying, "O heart I made, a heart beats here!
Face, my hands fashioned, see it in myself!
Thou hast no power nor mayst conceive of mine,
But love I gave thee, with myself to love,
And thou must love me who have died for thee!"

—*Robert Browning.*

III

POWER THROUGH A GREAT CONCEPTION OF CHRIST

To what conception of Christ did Paul come as the result of his Damascus vision, his hard thinking in Arabia, and his subsequent experience in proclaiming Christ to the Gentiles? What came to him out of the laboratory of persecution and fierce criticism?

As our knowledge of the life of Paul for the first twelve years after his conversion is almost a blank, we cannot trace the evolution of his views. In his earliest letters, the Epistles to the Thessalonians, they come to us almost full-orbed. Of course there were development and deepening, as in the case of all other vital men,[1] but it is only by a forced process that we can trace in Paul's letters any fundamental departure from the attitude that he reveals in his first Epistles. He changes the stress to meet changing circumstances. But in all his letters the conception of Christ at its root is the same. It has come to him as a revelation from God, and its authority had been continuously vindicated and deepened in experience, so that he held to it with a grip of steel.

[1] Professor Findlay's suggestion that Paul's imprisonment gave him opportunity to elaborate philosophically his conception of the person of Christ, and to realize that the doctrine of his pre-existence was a logical and natural outcome of his divine vocation, is interesting. *A Portrait of Paul,* p. 72f.

The Glorified Messiah

When Christ appeared to Paul on the Damascus road, he at once accepted him as the Jewish Messiah. That is to say, he believed that this was the Person for whom all the prophets had been looking. He was the One with whom the quest of the ages was to end. Much searching still remained, but it was all within that sphere which he calls the "unsearchable riches of Christ."

But Paul found his Messiah not in the flesh, but after he had been crucified and raised again from the dead. That fact sterilized out of Paul's thought of the Messiah those narrow nationalistic and materialistic notions with which it was infected in the mind of almost every Jew. His Messiah was not a king who was to reign at Jerusalem, but the glorified Son of God, and it was as such he straightway proclaimed him in the synagogue at Damascus.

An Indwelling Christ

Like the other disciples, after Paul was baptized he became increasingly conscious of a mysterious divine re-enforcement. The Holy Spirit came to him. As this Spirit came to him when he was baptized into the name of Jesus, he believed that it was the Spirit of Christ himself. Hence his Christ is not merely enthroned in heaven, he is an indwelling Presence.

This belief is central in Paul's experience and in his theology. His gospel is "Christ in you, the hope of glory." He believes that everyone may have the ex-

perience which he describes when he says, "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I that live; . . . but Christ liveth in me: and that life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself up for me" (Galatians 2. 20). Whatever he does, he does in Christ. All his striving is in Christ. He can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth him. The radiance of Christ's smile warms up his universe, and saves him from that shudder which came to the pagans as they looked out into the darkness and mystery that surrounded them.

The thought of Christ constantly purifies Paul's religious conceptions. Just as the oculist in treating our eyes is constantly dipping his instrument into an antiseptic to avoid infection, so every time Paul picked up a Greek expression or phrase he dipped it into the thought of Christ to purify it from its pagan associations.

It is interesting to note that Albert Schweitzer, the distinguished radical scholar, has recently expressed his profound conviction that Paul's doctrine of the presence of Christ with believers was not taken over from Greek mysticism, but was founded upon the teaching of Jesus himself. There are in the Synoptics specific sayings of Jesus that plainly substantiate Doctor Schweitzer's contention, as, for instance, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst" (Matthew 18. 20). "Settle it therefore in your hearts, not to meditate beforehand how to answer: for I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adver-

saries will not be able to withstand or to gainsay" (Luke 21. 12-15).

But these specific sayings are not the chief basis for our conviction that Paul's faith in the mystic presence of Christ is founded on the teaching of Jesus himself. The conception of the sudden and visible manifestation of Christ at the end of the age which is in the very warp and woof of the Gospels, implies his invisible presence with his faithful martyrs in the meantime. A Christ who was great enough to be the final Judge of mankind and the inaugurator of the apocalyptic kingdom would surely be present in spirit with those who were suffering for his sake.

And this faith in the presence of Christ with the believer which is founded on the sayings of Jesus is re-enforced, as we have already said, by experience. When Stephen was surrounded by the glaring eyes of the Sanhedrin which was about to stone him, his face did shine as it had been the face of an angel, and his words possessed a searching cogency that could not be answered. And when it came to the end, he looked up and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God. Stephen's experience of a mysterious re-enforcement amid trials and persecutions has been repeated a million times through the centuries.

A Cosmic Christ

But as Paul went forth in the work of God he was conscious of more than a spiritual re-enforcement. He found his physical wants provided for, and his body unaccountably strengthened to bear the terrific strain

that was put upon it. Outward events also shaped themselves to further the work of preaching Christ. Such events were not just occasional, but were happening continually. It was a miracle how Providence seemed constantly to aid him and his brethren. He therefore inferred that Christ was Lord not only in the realm of spirit but in the realm of nature. He was a cosmic Christ.

This is especially stressed in his later letters. Witness his great soaring ascription in Colossians, where he speaks of Christ as "the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation; for in him were all things created, in the heavens and upon the earth, things visible and things invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all things have been created through him and unto him; and he is before all things, and in him all things consist."

Paul's insistence on the cosmic character of Christ was due not merely to multiplied experiences of reenforcement as he proclaimed the gospel, but to the intellectual necessities of the case. Life is a unit. Christ must be supreme in the realm of nature if he is supreme in the realm of grace. Consistency of thinking demands that in all things he shall have the preeminence.[1]

[1] This conviction is especially prominent not only in Paul but in all the later writers of the New Testament. We see it in the book of Revelation, and also in the prologue of the fourth Gospel, which declares, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God; all things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that hath been made."

Paul, of course, had many experiences that seemed to disprove his belief in Christ's supremacy over nature. What a terrible trial to his faith the awful experience of the shipwreck must have been, preceded as it was by those fourteen days when he was tossed about, the sport of a winter hurricane! It seemed that the devil himself was in charge of nature, rather than the kindly Christ. But when in answer to Paul's steadfast faith he, a prisoner in chains, was made the practical captain of the ship, and was enabled so to hearten and direct those on board that they were all saved and correspondingly awe-struck before the Christ in whom he believed, his faith was strengthened rather than weakened by the experience that seemed most to put the lie to it. The time when a man's faith is strongest is just after something has happened that would naturally wreck it. If he holds on bravely for a little time, the wreck, instead of proving the destruction of his faith, will prove to be its re-enforcement. What seem to be death pains are transformed into birth pains.

And Paul believed that Christ was not merely the Lord of physical nature, but that he was directing the whole historical process and was destined to be the goal of its evolution. Here also Paul was in harmony with the other New-Testament writers. Men have been puzzling for years over the meaning of the book of Revelation, and have been trying to make of it a kind of almanac. The truth is that the one thing that the writer was trying to say is that the lordship of history was not in the hands of the Caesar who sat on the throne at Rome, but in the hands of Him whom Rome nailed to a

cross. In a word, Jesus is Caesar. And that was the steadfast faith also of Paul.

To believe this, of course, was a great adventure. But that is precisely what the New Testament says: We are saved by adventure, or, to use its more familiar phrase, we are saved by faith, which means exactly the same thing.

In conclusion, it is important to say that the words by which Paul and the other New-Testament writers described Christ are illustrations rather than definitions. He cannot be confined in a definition, and the New-Testament writers knew that far better than some later theologians. They gave us their ascriptions to Christ not as definitions, but as the least inadequate way of conveying that which was greater than words could express. The supreme heresy when talking of Christ is to lay down a theory of his person and say, "That is all there is of it." On Paul's map of the spiritual mysteries there were many white places on which was written, "Unexplored." And this sense of what Professor Otto calls the "numinous," this feeling that in speaking of Christ he was in touch with mysteries infinitely beyond his power to express, added force to his message and fire to his personal experience. The light that had come from heaven to search human hearts and heal human infirmities was like the X-ray. The X-ray is a mystery, and yet it reveals mystery; we know not what it is, and yet it reveals what is; so Christ to Paul was at the same time inexpressibly beyond his power to limit or define, and yet inexpressibly real. This paradox is proclaimed in the Gospels. Jesus says, "No man know-

eth the Son, save the Father." And yet we have the words, "I know mine own, and mine own know me, even as the Father knoweth me, and I know the Father."

Paul's Conception Not Fashionable Today

Paul's conception of Christ as the Son of God is not fashionable in certain quarters today. Men are accustomed to think of Jesus as a fascinating personality, a glorious, unselfish dreamer of extraordinary genius, the best man, indeed, that ever lived; but not as the divine Son of God. They say that the exaltation of Jesus which we find in Paul and the fourth Gospel, and in the New Testament as a whole, is projected on him from without, and is quite contrary to what he would have wished. This reaction has been justified at times by the tendency to dehumanize Jesus in order to emphasize his divinity. Any view of our Lord which in the slightest degree would suggest that he did not suffer and struggle, and at times feel the profoundest perplexity, is most certainly on the wrong track. The New Testament itself realizes this. The fourth Gospel, which strains language to exalt him to the highest pinnacle, is equally careful to stress the fact that he was weary and thirsty, and troubled in mind, and at times shaken as by an earthquake (John 4. 6, 7; 11. 33-38). But a merely human genius who lived and died two thousand years ago is not a Christ who can transform the man of today and send him forth victorious amid the struggles and temptations of life. The broken heart is not healed by a historical reminiscence, but by a living Saviour;

devils are not cast out by a memory. A Jesus who was merely a glorious first-century dreamer has never been the Christ of a triumphant Christianity.

Christ Himself the Perfecter of Our Faith

But someone may say, "This exalted view of Christ seems unreal to me in the light of modern thought; what am I to do about it?" And the answer is very simple. No one is required to work himself up to a theological position that has no relation to his experience. Such a proceeding is analogous to Paul's attempt to save himself by the works of the law. If the Christ of the New Testament is the real Christ, he manifests himself to every seeker, and a man's only business is to react promptly and vigorously to that manifestation of Christ which has come to him. We have all had contact with Christ in the innermost recesses of our being, in our relations with pure-minded and kindly disciples filled with his Spirit, in his influence on the community in which we live, in our reading of history, and in our study of the Gospels. Whatever manifestation of Christ has come to us, we are to respond to it, respond to it bravely, without regard to consequences. And then in view of the results of these experiments under the guidance of the Holy Spirit we are progressively to enlarge our conceptions of Christ. He himself is to be the Author and Finisher of our faith.

Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven,
Whose sin is covered.
Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not
iniquity,
And in whose spirit there is no guile.

—*Psalm 32. 1, 2.*

IV

LIFE RELEASED BY A SENSE OF FORGIVENESS

The Doctrine of the Cross Offensive Alike to Pharisee and Philosopher

To the Jews it was a gross blasphemy to say that a man weak enough to be crucified was the glorious Messiah whose coming the prophets had proclaimed. And what an unforgivable slander on their people to say that they had actually taken the Lord of Glory and nailed him to a cross!

Paul before his conversion was infuriated by the claim that Jesus was the Messiah, but when he surrendered to Christ he found that this pathetically weak Man who had meekly yielded to death was the power of God unto salvation. Christ released him from his sins and gave him a new life. Then he began to see that Jesus not only saved him from his sins, but satisfied his mind. The sweet and compulsive reasonableness of the gospel appealed to him with a certain inevitable finality.

But it was one thing for Paul to appreciate the reasonableness of the gospel; it was another to make the world see it. He well knew that the mass of the Jews reacted with the same angry repulsion against the message of the cross that he himself had manifested, and he realized that they would come to the light only

after witnesses to Jesus had borne their testimony "in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in watchings, in fastings."

As for the Greeks, the proclamation that men are saved by the death and resurrection of a Galilean peasant was to them sheer foolishness. It was out of harmony with all that the philosophers taught, and they treated it with contempt as unworthy of the attention of intelligent men. The patronizing mockery of the Athenian philosophers after his address on Mars Hill doubtless raised in Paul's mind the question whether it would not be wiser to give prominence in his preaching to arguments based on the assumptions of the prevailing philosophy, and cast in the fashionable rhetoric of the day. It is not likely that he was ever seriously tempted to give up preaching Christ and him crucified, but he may have wondered if he should continue to make it the one central and well-nigh exclusive topic of his preaching. At the end of the struggle he determined to stress the cross more, rather than less, and to avoid every rhetorical ornamentation whose glitter might attract the attention of his hearers away from the thorn-crowned head. He would not be like some church singers who in their efforts to place the tone properly forget to articulate the words, and leave the audience in ignorance of the sentiment of the song. He would hold up Christ, his crucified and risen Lord, in the simplest language possible, believing that men would be drawn to him not by philosophical arguments but by the gravitation of his infinite love.

Paul Depended on the Laboratory Demonstration

Paul's refusal to buttress his preaching by quotations from the philosophers was not a retreat from the intellectual battle of his day. It was, rather, an insistence on taking a skeptical class out of the lecture room into the laboratory, and showing the students that, however they might object to the teacher's theory, it most certainly worked in the test tubes. Says Paul, "My speech and my preaching were not in enticing words of man's wisdom, but in the demonstration of the Spirit and of power." With hooks of steel his message gripped the conscience of bad men, and through the Holy Spirit lifted them out of the mire into which they had sunk. He knew that such results of his message were evidences that could never be shaken by the advance of knowledge. There is no argument against a blooming desert. This was the thought of Isaiah when he said, "Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree: and it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off" (Isaiah 55. 13).

Paul was very wise in pursuing this policy. Dr. A. B. Davidson, the great Old-Testament teacher of Edinburgh, used to expatiate on the calamity it would have been to succeeding generations if the Bible had been put into the abstract jargon of some ancient system of philosophy. Moreover, the church should once and for all recognize the fact that the philosophy of Christianity, from the nature of the case, can never be in style in a worldly age, because its fundamental assumptions

are based on experiences that can only be had by those who have courage enough to adventure upon its program.

Paul Not an Obscurantist

On the other hand we must beware of obscurantism. By obscurantism we mean the type of religion that, when confronted by an intellectual difficulty, does not go through it but detours, muttering pious words about simple faith. Obscurantism is not faith, it is laziness. It is like the modern portrait painter's excuse for poor draughtsmanship when he explains his failure to make his picture look like his subject by saying, "I am not trying to give a photographic likeness, but an impression of the man's personality."

Indeed, Paul hastens to say, after he declares his purpose not to build his arguments on the prevailing philosophy: "We speak wisdom among the perfect; yet a wisdom not of this world, nor of the rulers of this world, which are coming to nought: but we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, even the wisdom that hath been hidden, which God foreordained before the worlds unto our glory" (1 Corinthians 2. 6ff.). He knew that no system of religion can permanently master mankind that does not satisfy the mind as well as warm the heart.

Paul himself in his deep-gripping thought sets us an example of strenuous intellectuality and exalted style. The very Epistle to the Corinthians in which Paul says that he did not come to them with excellency of speech, nor with enticing words of man's wisdom, is a deeply thoughtful utterance, and also abounds in beauties of

style. His hymn on the supremacy of love in the thirteenth chapter is one of the most exalted strains in literature. But in the interest of classic excellency of speech Paul refused to clothe the truth in the excellency of the speech of that day. If a sculptor were to receive a commission to make a statue of some famous woman to be placed in the Hall of Fame, the last thing he would do would be to dress her up in the extremes of the latest fashion, for he would know that in so doing he would make her ridiculous to the next generation. Rather would he carve a garment that had lines analogous to the simple drapery of the Greeks, for he would know that this would seem appropriate in the centuries to come.

In like manner Paul insisted on expressing the gospel not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Spirit teacheth, combining spiritual things with spiritual words: words that had the naturalness and simplicity and the flaming fire of the divine message which they expressed. It was only such preaching of Jesus Christ and him crucified that was effective in mediating that tremendously real experience, the forgiveness of sins.

Forgiveness No Self-Engendered Hallucination, But a Transforming Experience

One sometimes hears people speak scornfully of the Christian's faith that he is forgiven, as though it were merely a comfortable hallucination that comes at the end of a persistent course of autosuggestion. The patient breathes deeply, as they suggest, on the operat-

ing table, and then his conscience goes under the anesthetic. But a man's sins are forgiven not when he has quieted his conscience by a psychical anesthetic, but when something happens to him that makes him sure that God loves him, and makes him turn away from his sins and begin to live a life of grateful obedience to God. In other words, a man's sins are forgiven when he is restored to conscious communion with the Father of mercies, holds out a forgiving hand to those who have wronged him, and begins to live a life of stalwart righteousness.

The most beautiful illustration of what is meant by the forgiveness of sins is found in the story of the woman who came to Jesus with the precious ointment and washed his feet with her tears and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Jesus defended the woman before the scornful Pharisee because, said he, the fact that she loves so much proves that her sins are forgiven.

What was it in Paul's preaching of the cross that caused the burden of men's sins to roll away? To profess fully to explain this mystery would indeed be presumptuous, but we may be sure that as Paul told the story of Jesus—how he went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; and how when they crucified him he kept saying, "Father, forgive them"; and how God raised him from the dead—his audience for some reason felt that God loved them even as Christ had loved sinners. Whenever love and forgiveness are mediated to us by even an ordinary human being, it becomes possible for us to believe that God loves us after the same fashion. If a mother for-

gives a naughty child seven times in a day when he is sorry, the child can believe that God will do the same for him. How much more can we believe in the love of God when we look into the face of the thorn-crowned Christ! For Christ not only manifested the acme of human love, but he is the reaching down into human life of the divine love. God through his Spirit has made the spectacle of Christ on the cross miraculously powerful in speaking peace to repentant sinners. This is not a theory but a thousandfold demonstrated fact. The cross is the supremely effective symbol of the deepest reality in the heart of God.

The Need of Varied and Fresh Forms for Expressing the Way of Salvation Through the Cross

But there is more than one way of expressing this truth. Paul in explaining the meaning of the death of Christ speaks of it in a figure of speech drawn from the animal sacrifices that were common in his day. It was a familiar sight as men passed by the heathen temples to see the priests sacrificing animals for the sins of the people. The idea that there must be some bloody sacrifice for sins was in the very texture of the religious thought of his day, and Paul would have been foolish if he had not spoken of Christ as the sacrifice for our sins. The metaphor was effective. Men exclaimed in wonder: "Then God himself has provided the sacrifice! God must be infinitely good!"

But most of us have never seen an animal sacrifice, and so today this figure tends to lose its effectiveness. An illustration may be like a temporary bridge serving

a good purpose at a crisis; but a man would not feel obliged to adopt as a permanent architectural model the pontoon over which his nation's troops had successfully crossed a river on the eve of some critical offensive.

Jesus himself did not repeat over and over the figures which he found in his Bible. He was constantly ransacking human experience for new figures to convey the startlingly new conceptions that were in his mind. "To what," says he, "shall I liken the kingdom of heaven? and whereunto shall I liken it?" That search should always be kept up by the Christian teacher. If a man has been hearing of the transfusion of blood to save an acquaintance in some neighboring hospital, then to him we can best express the atonement by saying that Christ offers his own blood to keep us from the death of sin. If a child's life has been saved by receiving the antitoxin for diphtheria, wisdom suggests that to that family the doctrine of the atonement might best be expressed by saying that just as this antitoxin has been produced on the body of a suffering beast, so Christ by his sufferings developed the antitoxin to save us from our sins. The new illustration will help men better to understand the old truth, and to pass it on to others.

Paul did not use even Jesus' figures of speech, and we are not under obligation to use Paul's. As we have already suggested, there is danger of so insisting on Paul's metaphors that we lose the power to propagate his ideas. The very life of the Christian evangel depends upon our exhausting our ingenuity to find new ways and means for keeping ourselves and our fellow

men freshly, and even startlingly, reminded of the fact that God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him might not perish, but have everlasting life.

Wrong Inferences From Paul's Metaphors

Shallow men have camped on Paul's metaphor that Christ is the sacrifice for our sins, forgetting that a metaphor is not a tourist camp, but a springing board from which to dive into an idea. Hence they have drawn from it inferences that Paul certainly never had in mind. They have talked as though our Heavenly Father were like a heathen God who needed to have his fierceness mollified by sacrifices. Paul's idea was exactly the opposite of this, for he always ascribes the atonement to the love in the heart of the Father. God, says he, commended his love toward us in that "while we were yet weak, in due season Christ died for the ungodly." And again, "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself." "Him who knew no sin he made to be sin on our behalf; that we might become the righteousness of God in him." Here everything springs from the compassion in the heart of the Infinite. What a glorious paradox is the apostle's statement that the God who was to be propitiated set forth Christ to be a propitiation through faith in his blood! To Paul, God is not a bloody Moloch that needs to be mollified. He is a loving Father who is willing to sacrifice to the bloody limit for his children.

Some have stumbled at the saying, "Him who knew no sin he made to be sin on our behalf." But this is a

universal principle. God makes every loving father and mother to suffer vicariously for the sins of their children. And he makes every patriot to be sin as the penalty for the sins of his country. That is to say, he makes him suffer as though he himself had been guilty of his country's iniquity. That is always the penalty of loving; which is simply another way of saying it is the penalty of being like God. A man who has the spirit of God is always in his small human degree a lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world. We fill up, as Paul says, on our part that which remains of the sufferings of Christ.

Salvation Through the Cross Discredited by Its Shallow Advocates

The supreme heretic is not the modernist who denies the atonement, but the conventionally orthodox man who proclaims the atonement glibly, but with manifest lack of feeling and manifest lack of the sacrificial spirit in his own life. For a lily-fingered young ecclesiastic who, instead of being a brave prophet, is merely the pet lamb of a fashionable congregation, to hand out the elements, saying, "This is the body of Christ which was broken for you," is a profanation! The merely conventional repetition of phrases about the blood becomes ptomaine poisoning to those who listen. Vain repetition accounts in no small degree for the disgust of many audiences with the preaching of the cross.

The writer recently stopped between trains in Chicago, and found his way to the famous Pacific Garden Mission, where so many men have been rescued from

desperate conditions of sin and misery. The walls were covered with mottoes which would have seemed sickeningly unreal if they had been inscribed on the walls of a fashionable church. And in the center was a red illuminated sign flaring forth the words, "The blood!" This was not cant, nor vain repetition. Men were working here desperately for the rescue of the outcast. Under such circumstances the message that Christ died for our sins has the right sound.

Forgiving Grace a Perpetual Need of the Most Saintly

Paul's doctrine of the forgiveness of sins does not imply, nor does the New Testament as a whole suggest, that men need the atonement only at the beginning. The antiseptic must be applied after every moral scratch lest blood poisoning set in. Paul stressed the importance of observing sacredly the Lord's Supper, wherein the Master's words were repeated: "This is my body broken for you. This is my blood of the *New* Covenant, which was shed for you and for many unto the remission of sins. This do as often as ye drink it in remembrance of me." The Christian, while his heart may be right, yet by reason of the narrowness of his mind and the tragically undeveloped character of his ethical ideals, is constantly sinning against the laws of his body, his mind, and his soul. No matter how hard he tries to write in God's copybook, his pen is apt to leak and to leave a blot on the white page. At his best he is in the condition of a healthy, happy child that is entirely innocent, but is constantly cluttering up things

and needing to be followed about by the nurse to restrain him from destroying property and making himself a general nuisance. Those who walk most in the light, while they may love the Lord their God with all their hearts, need mercy for the bungling that is caused by their ignorance of the complicated and delicate laws of life.

The saintly Bishop Bashford, of China, once said to the writer: "I have been inquiring studiously among all the holiest men that I know, asking whether they succeed in living continuously without any sense of condemnation. And all of the best of them say they do not. They may keep from deliberate sin of all kinds, but, often quite unintentionally, they blunder in a way that brings a sense of condemnation. But one thing they always do. Without seeking to excuse themselves, or hide their failure either from themselves or anyone else, instantly they fly to the cleansing of Christ. Hence they never for a moment get out of communion with God."

The importance of this abiding sense of God's forgiving grace cannot be overestimated. For the microbes of sin multiply with fatal rapidity in the soul of the man who feels himself alienated from God. He resorts to drink and to the most vulgar and offensive amusements not because he enjoys them, but to get rid of the wretched uneasiness produced by the half-inarticulate gnawings of a guilty conscience.

Of course to many people this whole doctrine of the cross must forever remain offensive. The thought that they need dying for disturbs their complacency. James

Denney, of Glasgow, once said that the thought of salvation through the death of Christ is always nauseating to every man who has not reached a stage of moral desperation in his struggle with sin. Your smug and complacent Pharisee must go on and meet the tragic results of his pride before he is prepared to look up and see that the cross is his only hope.

Paul's Underhold on the Inferiority Complex

Strangely enough, this same manifestation of divine love is a sovereign remedy for the man who is suffering from the opposite malady—the self-accusings of a morbid conscience. There is a superficial therapy now in fashion which assures such a man that he is as good as anybody, if not better. But nothing could be more foolish than to seek to rub out the consciousness of sin from an oversensitive soul by the substitution of a Pharisaic complacency. Paul would say, "You are probably worse than you think you are. You may be even as bad as I am. For I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing; but I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me. And so likewise he is able to make all grace abound toward you so that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound unto every good work." This form of treatment is not a mere theory; it has proved helpful again and again in the writer's dealing with morbid adolescents.

We are told also that melancholy and despairing patients in the psychopathic wards of our hospitals have been especially soothed by the administration of

the sacrament. The reason, of course, is that it vividly sets forth the forgiving grace of God.

A popular professor in a great American university offered a course in mental hygiene. His classroom was crowded. "What will be the textbook?" asked the students. "I will tell you at the end of the course," he replied. At the close of the semester he informed the class that his textbook had been the New Testament, the greatest book of mental hygiene in existence. He had not repeated its phrases, but its principles he had continually applied. He doubtless found much material in Paul.

The apostle had not merely the underhold on the inferiority complex. His doctrine of the cross was a mental therapeutic along another line. Witness his treatment of the fears that haunted the first-century mind. He did not say there was not ground for those fears. He simply insisted that a loving power greater than any malignant force was enlisted on their behalf. "If God is for us," said he, "who is against us? . . . Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth; who is he that shall condemn? It is Christ Jesus that died, yea rather, that was raised from the dead, who is at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. . . . For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

IN HIS IMAGE

God does not lay a pattern down
  When he creates a soul;
He does not fit and measure
  And preordain the whole.

He builds in his own image,
  An image that must be
As fluid as the rivers,
  As restless as the sea.

As vibrant as the pulse of life,
  As volent as a song,
Built to grow, evolve, create,
  Pure and free and strong.

—*Sarah Josselyn Wilson.*

V

POWER THROUGH FREEDOM FROM LEGALISM

Paul's Doctrine of Salvation by Faith Based on Experience

PAUL was saved without the performance of ceremony. The Lord did not command him to go into the synagogue and say certain prayers, and purify himself after the fashion of the rabbis. While he was on the way to Damascus on an errand of persecution Jesus appeared to him just as he was. It was a miracle of grace to Paul. He did not reach up to God; God reached down to him. Paul's theology is largely an interpretation of this experience. H. R. Mackintosh says that Paul's theology is simply a witness to what happened to him. He believed that if God would save him in his sins, without the intervention of any kind of pious incantation, he would save anyone else without requiring such performances.

The Way of Faith the Only Way Accessible to All

This sense of the immediate accessibility of salvation to any man anywhere, without the performance of any kind of a rite, and without the attempt to crowd his mental anatomy into any kind of theological straitjacket, this belief that one does not have to go on a pilgrimage, or work himself up into an ecstasy, or per-

form any sort of spiritual gymnastic, but that he only needs to accept God's mercy just where he is, is an exceedingly important part of Paul's conception of the way to life and power.

It is a curious fact that some branches of Christendom which have most stridently insisted on the doctrine of salvation by faith, and have reacted most violently against the idea that certain sacramental performances by authorized priests are necessary to salvation—these very churches have introduced a new form of legalism by insisting that candidates for baptism must work themselves up to the acceptance of an elaborate creed. It is often wholly impossible for a man to accept offhand even the best constructed creed. That is the reason why Abraham Lincoln never joined the church which he regularly attended and with whose spirit and purposes he was in sympathy. It required subscription to a creed that few if any of us would be willing to accept in its entirety. Indeed, the ministers of that denomination would certainly not dare preach all of its pronouncements today, but they required Lincoln to say that he believed it, and he was too honest to say that he did. Truth becomes real to us only in sections. To demand subscription to a fully developed creed puts off the day of salvation. But Paul says, "Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation," and God does not require any man to do anything that he cannot do just now.

The writer remembers being called out of a college settlement house one night to go to see a poor shopgirl who was dying of pneumonia. A colleague who went

with him asked the girl if he should read to her from the Bible. She said, "No, I am too tired to listen." I at once said to her, "You do not need to listen, you do not even need to pray, you are too tired; all you need to do is to refuse to doubt the mercy of the Lord Christ who died for you." In saying this I had back of me the full authority of Paul, and of Christ himself.

We are told by physicians that mental disease, even more than physical disease, needs immediate treatment, because if it is allowed to develop beyond a certain point, the difficulty of getting the mind back to balance is enormously increased. This is even more true of spiritual disease. Hence there must be a way of salvation that is instantaneous, and that way is to begin to act as though God were as merciful as the Jesus who prayed, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." If one makes this experiment, the signs that he is on the right track will multiply to a most astonishing degree.

The Spread of the Gospel Hindered by Legalism

Some people in Paul's day quite agreed with him that a man was saved by faith, but they insisted that before he could attain to the higher reaches of spiritual experience he must add some of the Jewish performances like circumcision, and the keeping of those peculiar national rites and ceremonies and taboos that had come down from primitive times. Otherwise he could not, as the Masons would say, be a thirty-third-degree Christian.

This was a very difficult contention for Paul to meet,

because he too believed in the divine authority of the Scriptures. His opposers could quote many a passage that seemed to say unmistakably that the blessing of God comes from the keeping of this code of rules and ceremonies. And they could instance the fact that for the most part Jesus himself observed them. But Paul saw plainly that if the church imposed upon the Gentile world such trifles as abstaining from pork, and observing the other enslaving and irritating taboos of Judaism, the gospel of Jesus would make little or no progress among them, for these taboos simply did not commend themselves in any wise to the conscience of the non-Jewish world. And even the Jew himself was at a loss to give a reason for them.

One day on an Italian steamer, on the way from Alexandria to Naples, the writer was in the company of three very delightful young Jews who had been making a pilgrimage to Palestine. When the steamer halted at Old Syracuse, the young men came to him and, with much embarrassment, asked him to pay the few pennies that were charged by the launch for taking us ashore. "This is our Sabbath," they said, "and the law forbids us to pay out any money on the Sabbath; we do not know why, but it is the law, and we must obey it." And their inability to see the reason back of this rabbinical refinement was doubtless only typical of their difficulty with many of the rules of Leviticus.

Every Forward Step an Act of Faith

The ancient Greek world could see no reason for submission to the enslaving demands of the law. Hence

Paul took the position that conformity to the Jewish rules and rites must not be imposed upon the new converts. The car of their progress in the gospel must be streamlined. The Christians were to depend solely upon "the kindness of God our Saviour, and his love toward man," who saves us "not by works done in righteousness, which we did ourselves, but according to his mercy . . . through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, which he poured out upon us richly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour." Not only was the initial step to depend wholly upon the grace of God, without the performance of any incantation, but every successive step should be taken in the same faith. As Paul said to the Romans, the gospel of Christ "is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. . . . For therein is revealed a righteousness of God from faith unto faith," that is, in answer to successive steps of faith.

Paul seemed to fear the slightest dependence upon anything merely external. He felt that to apply the match of legalism to the electric light of God's free grace would only break the bulb. The current was ready to enlighten the soul: all that was needed was to turn the key of faith. In Philippians he says, "What things were gain to me, these have I counted loss for Christ." All his proud, Pharisaic, rabbinical superiority he cast into the discard as a danger and a disadvantage. His one ambition was to have a righteousness which is from God by faith; and so, forgetting the things which were behind, and stretching forward to the things which were before, he pressed on toward the goal unto the

prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. And then immediately, turning to the church, he said, "As many as be perfect, be thus minded: . . . only, whereunto we have attained, by that same rule let us walk." That is, let us remember that just as we got our initial salvation by throwing ourselves upon the goodness of God, so every succeeding forward movement must be by the same method.

We have the same thought in Romans 5. "Being therefore justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; through whom also we have had our access by faith into this grace wherein we stand." Each added grace comes from just one more assumption that God is better than any man has dreamed.

Stressing Nonessentials Quenches Life

Stressing some unimportant external may seem quite innocent in itself, but it is not so. To add something to Christ's way of salvation is as absurdly futile as it would be to hitch a team of mules in front of a great locomotive to help it out in case the grade got too steep. And to this agree the words of our Lord when he said, "Men do not put new wine into old bottles lest the wine burst the bottles and be spilled, and the bottles also be destroyed."

Stressing a mere external observance quenches the Spirit. It takes a man's mind away from the main point, and tends to restrain his creative power. It is harmful in more realms than the technically religious. Imagine, for instance, a professor of oratory who in

laying down the fundamental principles of success in public speech should rightly stress the importance of a full knowledge of the subject, profound convictions, a clear outline, a definite, practical purpose, an intimate knowledge of the psychology of the audience, and then add this innocent-looking bit of legalism: "Be sure that every two minutes you make such and such a gesture." The gesture might be quite graceful, but in watching the clock to make that gesture at that particular time the whole speech would be spoiled, and there would be no possibility of any high reach of spontaneous eloquence. Whenever any act or idea, however innocent in itself, ceases to be meaningful and important, to stress it is harmful; because moral victory requires the centering of the whole soul upon that which is essential. Paul realized that to insist that Gentiles observe Jewish national customs would not only repel them, but even if they did become Christians, would confuse their minds and keep them from the power and joy that was their privilege.

Legalism Constantly Assumes New Forms

We have so completely outgrown the particular kind of legalism against which Paul inveighed that we are fatally apt to forget that legalism when cast out at the front door crawls in through the window. We must remember that legalism is all the time assuming new and seductive forms, and must be sprayed as constantly as the insects in our gardens. Among college students, for instance, legalism is this: To be a Christian you need to conform to the standard of behavior that is

conventional in that particular college; if you will abstain from the vices that the college recognizes as vices, if you will attend certain meetings in the church and in the Y. M. C. A., and thus go through the forms prescribed by religious propriety, you are a Christian. That is simply the old Jewish externalism in a new guise. Even the man who is chemically pure of any dependence on external rites becomes a legalist as soon as he ceases to be humbled by the infinite love of God in Christ, and complacently imagines that he is acquiring merit by stressing the social gospel. A man may even become a legalist in his literal loyalty to Paul the great enfranchiser himself. As these words are being written the writer hears of a charming and effective young missionary who has become morbidly conscientious about obeying Paul's injunction, "Let the women keep silence in the churches," and has resigned from the mission in order to observe his precept—as though a bit of advice adapted to a peculiar social situation in the ancient world was obligatory as a hard-and-fast rule for modern situations totally different.

Stressing of Nonessentials Keeps Christians Apart

The stressing of certain taboos and nonessentials also greatly hurts our influence by keeping us out of touch with those who do not observe them. When Peter came down to Antioch to show his interest in the marvelous revival there, at first he ate freely with the non-Jews, and his influence doubtless was very great because he must have been a genial and fascinating man. But when "certain came from James" (Galatians 2. 12), his

Jewish scruples reasserted themselves, and out of fear of the condemnation of the stricter Jews he began always to have another engagement when invited by Gentiles to eat with them. Peter doubtless was very conscientious about this, but think of the way his influence must have waned among the Gentile brethren when it was whispered around that Peter felt too good to break bread with them. The modern parallels in the way of exclusiveness and separation are too sadly manifest to need mentioning.

Stressing Nonessentials Separates From Christ

Not only is a man's influence hurt when he makes any nonessential a necessary part of religion, but he is liable to lose completely his own hold upon Christ. "Ye are severed from Christ, ye who would be justified by the law; ye are fallen away from grace," says Paul to the Galatians (5. 4). For as soon as a man gets his eyes from off the cross, the love of Christ ceases to constrain him as strongly as it otherwise would. His vitality is lowered, and the bacteria of sin gain lodgment in his nature. The struggle becomes too great for him. Like a dog attempting to stand on his hind legs, he soon feels the strain of his unnatural religiousness and ere long he is down again on all fours living the life of the carnal man. Paul understood perfectly that when men begin to be Pharisees again their hearts become cold, and their hands lose their cunning. He knew that churches amidst heathen and vile surroundings could only maintain the gospel standards under the impulse of a great passion, and a great passion of love and

joy never fills the heart of a man whose eyes are deflected from Christ by bowing under burdens that the Lord never laid upon him.

The Wonder of Our Enfranchisement

The more one knows of Jewish legalism, the more he is simply overwhelmed with the glorious enfranchisement secured for the church by such men as Paul. One fears that in our freedom from bondage to nonessentials we are like the man in the parable who went into the great wedding feast without the wedding garment of gratitude and wonder at the goodness of the king. We do not sing enough over our deliverances. Constantly Christians should stop to rejoice over the fact that they are no longer under slavery to ceremonial, no longer under hard-and-fast rules, no longer condemned to earn merit by forced acts of benevolence and asceticism. The year of jubilee has come, and Christians should never be found for a moment unregardful of the fact that the Lord our God has brought us out of the land of Egypt, and out of the house of bondage.

The writer in his youthful days in a college settlement knew a rescue mission worker who was extraordinarily successful in helping drunkards onto their feet. He was a man of great refinement, and did not speak the language of the tramp at all; but he seemed constantly to be luxuriating in the freedom of the gospel. His sheer joy fascinated the poor homeless wretches with whom he worked. And so it always is. A geyser of gratitude in a man's life is always a source of power.

The psalmist prays, "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation, and uphold me with thy free spirit; then will I teach transgressors thy ways, and sinners shall be converted unto thee."

There is something truly infinite in duty: it is a region that can never be enclosed; we pitch our tent upon its boundary-field, and as we survey it, we detect an ampler realm beyond.—*James Martineau.*

VI

A LIFE WHOSE MAINSPRING IS GRATITUDE

The Simplicity of New Testament Ethics

ACCORDING to Paul the Christian ethic is very simple. Neither circumcision, said he, availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but faith that worketh by love. That is to say, the one thing that matters is that a man has faith in the love of God and expresses this faith in an answering love to God and his fellow men. As Paul says in Romans, the whole law for the Christian is fulfilled in one word, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Love worketh no ill to his neighbor: love therefore is the fulfillment of the law.

Saint Augustine puts this truth startlingly. One would deem his words heresy if they did not come from one of the saints of the church. Said he, "To be a Christian is just one thing, Love and do as you please." Alexander Whyte tells us that Saint John of the cross said the same thing to his over-ascetic disciples: "Only love God enough," said he, "and then eat anything you like, and eat as much as you like." Of course there are a great many things that we will not please to do if we unselfishly love God.

The very heart of the New Testament religion is that a man should express with frank wholeheartedness the inner temper of his mind. Religion is not a perform-

ance, but a boiling over of inward passionate gratitude to God. "It is a surging tide of generosity that knows no high-water mark." So Paul said, "Love, and then let yourself go; run the risk of blundering a little rather than of hindering the spontaneous expression of a great devotion to Christ." The experts at typing keep their eyes on the copy and trust their fingers to find the right letter. This may mean blunders at first, but in the long run it means speed, ease, and correctness. After the same manner, says Paul, keep your eyes on Christ, the great Copy, and let yourself go.

Love Demands a Growing Intelligence

Now, if a man's one objective is to love, of course his ethics will be constantly developed as he learns increasingly the complexities of human life and society. The Scripture enjoins the giving of a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple. But the knowledge of bacteriology that God has recently given us adds this injunction: See that the well is not too near the stable.

Thus the one law of invincible good will leaves us free to develop our ethics. This I pray, says Paul, that your love may abound more and more in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, that you may approve the things which are excellent—or, as Moffatt says, "choose the things that are vital." And what is vital we learn by observation and experiment checked up by the experience of the race.

Furthermore, circumstances are constantly changing. None of us ever face quite the situation that is faced by someone else who is disposed to make rules for us.

Indeed, each task is always a little different from any that we have ever had before, or anyone else has ever had before, and if love is our one duty we are free to adjust ourselves to the new situation.

And not only are our circumstances different, but we ourselves are different from other people in temperament, in background, in education. And hence the natural and most effective expression of our best selves will differ from that of any other person that ever lived.

Freedom Leads to Variety and Spontaneity

If Paul's doctrine of freedom were fully taken hold of by the church, Christians would be vastly more interesting. That tameness that many of them manifest would cease to exist; there would be spontaneity and variety in our ministrations in the church, and hence young people would not be repelled from the Christian life. It is a plain fact, though one does not like to admit it, that sometimes a rather wild boy who lets himself go spontaneously is much more attractive than a good boy who always restrains himself according to the conventional model of propriety. This is not because goodness is less attractive than badness, but because the restrained lad has simply not caught the secret of Jesus, which is that, once you are redeemed, your life should be more like the hop-skip-and-jump of a child at play than the measured tread of a soldier observing the goose-step. Saint Francis of Assisi is in some respects a beautiful illustration of the kind of freedom that Paul was urging upon the church. True, Saint Francis was morbidly ascetic, but he succeeded in being God's merry

man, and he was constantly doing things that were most delightfully unexpected. He had the fascination of originality and spontaneity.

In contrast with Saint Francis, the deadly uniformity imposed by Catholic worship is an illustration of what Paul so vehemently opposed. And, alas! Protestants have not great reason to glory over their Catholic brethren. Paul would have Christians as varied in their manifestations of the beauty of holiness as a bed of pansies.

Christian Liberty Means Freedom of Thought as Well as of Deed

Paul believed not only in the liberty of spontaneous action, but in the liberty of spontaneous thinking. We would call him an independent thinker, but Paul himself would shrink from this designation. He would say, "I dared to follow the Spirit." "We received, not the spirit of the world," says he, "but the Spirit which is from God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us by God. Which things also we speak not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Spirit teacheth; combining spiritual things with spiritual." And it is always the mind of the Spirit to make every man express himself in a manner that is in harmony with the peculiar make-up of his own personality. Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. The Spirit is the author of variety, and the unity of the Spirit is never the unity of sameness, but of co-operation and mutual respect. A prison lock step is not a symbol of Christian unity. The sparrow and the eagle

cannot flap their wings to the same rhythm; and if required to do so, both birds must cease to fly.

Love as the Sole Duty Leads to Joy and Peace

After mentioning love as the first fruit of the Spirit, Paul immediately adds joy and peace. There is a psychological connection here, for the habit of overflowing with gratitude and love brings joy. Joy is the golden, smiling pumpkin that grows in the cornfield of love. It is a true instinct that leads the Catholic Church to insist that the saints whom it canonizes must be men of conspicuous joyfulness. But love leads to peace as well as to joy. When a man's one and only duty is to love his neighbor as himself, life is amazingly simplified. The friction is gone. He has an integrated personality.

Curtailment of Liberty Represses Spiritual Life

Every new and vital movement of the Spirit always has a fanatical fringe, and Paul's doctrine of liberty was soon perverted by reckless men. The early Catholic Church, observing the rather wild extremes to which these men went, set itself to preserve the original gospel intact. As its own spirituality evaporated it insisted on uniformity in the expression of belief. Creeds were petrified into hard-and-fast forms. This uniformity served a certain purpose, but it was destructive of the apostolic glow, and certainly tended to quench the Spirit.

Rules not only burden the soul and check spontaneity, but they put limits to the sacrificial spirit. A young man had just been taken on to assist Mr. Edison in a

piece of research work. "What are the rules of the laboratory?" he asked. The great inventor looked at him with astonishment, and answered, "There are no rules; we are here to accomplish something."

This expresses exactly the spirit of Paul. He looked to Christ who loved mankind to the limit, and then embarked on his own daily program of loving to the limit. The freedom of the gospel means not hammock-swung ease, but liberty at any cost to give oneself with sacrificial abandon to the building up of the Kingdom.

. . . Arise and fly
The reeling Faun, the sensual feast;
Move upward, working out the beast,
And let the ape and tiger die.

—*Tennyson, "In Memoriam."*

VII

POWER FROM CRUCIFYING SELF

Freedom of the Spirit Means Control of the Flesh

We have been saying that, according to Paul, we must do our moral typewriting by the touch method. That is to say, we must keep our eye on the copy and let our fingers caper freely over the keys of life. Otherwise we shall be self-conscious and ineffective.

But we find that following spontaneous impulses has its limits due to a fundamental conflict within us. "We are both earth-bound and star-led." The normal physical impulses tend to overreach themselves and interfere with the normal spiritual impulses, and then there is war. Paul puts it in Galatians in this way: "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are contrary the one to the other; that ye may not do the things that ye would." Whenever the higher nature asserts itself, the animal nature growls angrily. Whenever the lower nature gets into the saddle, then there is a cry of complaint from all that is idealistic within us, because "an invincible instinct framed us for royalty."

Sometimes men try to reduce themselves to that comfortable and serene mental attitude that we imagine to exist in a group of swine. Doubtless these animals do find satisfaction in their manner of life, but when one of the sons of God seeks to live in that way, the laws of

nature turn his hogpen into a hell. A terrific nemesis comes to the man who decides to live on the mere animal plane.

We have a strange paradox in the Epistle to the Galatians. Paul says, "For freedom did Christ set us free: stand fast therefore, and be not entangled again in a yoke of bondage" (5. 1). But in the very same chapter he says, "They that are of Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with the passions and the lusts thereof" (5. 24). How absurd! A free man nailed to a cross! And yet while verbally this is a contradiction, it is not so in practical experience. Freedom never comes until the flesh is altogether under subjection to the spirit.

Paul insists not only on freedom from the law, but on freedom from sin. We have the same twofold insistence in the words of Jesus. Looking into the faces of people weighed down with the hard, man-made religion that the rabbis had loaded upon them, he said, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." But he adds, "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me." As though there was no rest without a yoke. In John Jesus says, "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." But this same Jesus says, "If thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee." "If any man will come after me, let him . . . take up his cross, and follow me." He released men from the manacles and chains of a forced and unnatural religiousness, that they might master their lusts and be free to co-operate with

him in getting under the burden of the world's woe and sin.

The Duty of Crucifying the Flesh Often Grievously Misunderstood

But in the history of Christianity there have been many grievous misunderstandings of this insistence on crucifying the flesh. Men have supposed the crucifying of the flesh meant the suppression of every natural instinct. But the flesh, according to Paul, is not the physical appetites and passions, which are the very foundation of manhood and character, but those appetites and passions when they get out from under the control of the Spirit and revolt against the law of love.

If we read Paul's list of the works of the flesh, we shall find that, for the most part, they are simply good things gone wrong. "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness"—or, in other words, the pure and God-given sex instinct debased and separated from the control of love. Next in the list come idolatry and sorcery —manifestations of the religious instinct that have ceased to be moral and have become a method of working God rather than of letting God work us. And then follow enmities, strife, jealousies, wraths, factions, divisions, parties, envyings. These vices are the normal tendencies to independence, individual initiative, and healthy emulation, that have broken the harness and loosed themselves from the law of love. And then follow two others: drunkenness, revelings, in which the poor soul, having lost the joy of the Lord, follows the

normal impulse to search for happiness by seeking artificial happiness through drink.

There have been religions which sought to extirpate these natural desires. That perhaps is one of the fundamental ideals of Buddhism. And thousands of Christians have felt that sanctity could be gained through the mortification of the flesh. When the Catholic Archbishop of Westminster died, they found on his arm a steel bracelet with sharp points piercing his flesh, which he had been wearing as a means of self-mortification.

This type of asceticism does not find sanction in the example of Jesus, who was complained of by the strait-laced religionists as a glutton and a wine drinker, a man, indeed, who was living a "fast life." Paul evidently was afraid of asceticism. "Why do you subject yourselves to ordinances, Handle not, nor taste, nor touch? . . . Which things indeed have a show of wisdom in will-worship and humility, and severity to the body; but are not of any value against the indulgence of the flesh." (See Colossians 2. 20-23.) And if his thought is adequately represented in First Timothy, he sternly rebukes asceticism when he says, "The Spirit saith expressly, that in later times some shall fall away from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons, . . . forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats which God created to be received with thanksgiving by them that believe and know the truth." A college student picturesquely expressed the way in which the flesh must be both sternly controlled and helpfully utilized, when she said, "We wisely pay out money for lightning rods to protect

our house from the destructive effects of electricity, and then wisely pay out more money to wire our house for electric lights."

The reason why Paul was so opposed to asceticism as a means for cultivating sanctity, was, in the first place, because asceticism tends to get our mind off the main point, which is to believe in the love of God and then overflow in spontaneous gratitude and obedience. Asceticism also tends to beget pride, which is the sworn enemy of spiritual power and peace. It is doubtful, for instance, whether the archbishop with his bracelet of torturing steel was helped to spiritual humility thereby. It would have been better if he had allowed his heart to be more deeply pierced by the woes of the poor. And, finally, asceticism leads to immoral reactions. The stern, repressed Puritanism of the days of Cromwell, by going to the extreme, brought about the reaction toward ribald and wild immorality in the days of Charles II. History, as well as the Scripture, shows plainly that the strictest path is by no means always the safest.

An Engrossing Responsibility a Help to Self-Control

Paul evidently realized that moral safety was largely dependent on the joy that comes from the filling up of the life with enthusiastic and all-sided activity. He said, "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh." Of course when a man follows the Holy Spirit, he gives himself to limitless love for God and man. Hence every ability within him is called into full-

est activity. Lindbergh was saved from some peculiar besetments of youth during his passage across the Atlantic. Boys are saved from certain temptations of a serious nature while they are playing football. The sense of responsibility for winning the game and maintaining the credit of the college acts as an efficient restraining power.

An automobile rides most easily when the back seat is full. Dean Inge says that melancholy is often the ache of an unused faculty. We are happier when our lives are full, and hence we are safer from temptation, for unhappiness is the breeding ground of sin. Hamlet said: "I have of late—but wherefore I know not—lost all my mirth, foregone all custom of exercises; and indeed it goes so heavily with my disposition that this goodly frame, the earth, seems to me a sterile promontory, this most excellent canopy, the air, look you, this brave o'erhanging firmament, this majestical roof fretted with golden fire, why, it appears no other thing to me than a foul and pestilent congregation of vapors." It would have been easier for Hamlet to keep in a normal frame of mind if he had divided his spare time between hoeing in the garden and making himself familiar with the problems of the people he was in time to govern.

Paul understood this principle thoroughly. After urging the Galatians to cast off the burden of the law he goes on to say, "For ye, brethren, were called for freedom; only use not your freedom for an occasion to the flesh, but through love be servants one to another." Paul's thought would be conveyed perhaps more per-

fectly if it were translated, Enslave yourselves one to another. Get out from under the artificial, man-imposed restraints of Jewish precepts and rites, in order that from pure love you may become slaves unto your fellow Christians. And later on he says, "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ."

In passing, it is interesting to note that in the letter to the Galatians, which most fiercely attacks the artificial strait jacket of the Jewish law as a way of salvation, Paul sternly asserts the inescapability of the moral law. Share your earthly goods, says Paul, with those who instruct you in spiritual things; for "be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting" (Galatians 6. 6-8).

One may ask, Is not this in direct contradiction to Paul's insistence on freedom from the law? If we are enmeshed in natural law, how can we be free? But there is a distinction between outwardly imposed rules and the laws written in the very constitution of the soul. Paul would say that when a man overflows spontaneously and naturally in love, he is keeping the law of his nature.

The Antiseptic Character of a Healthy Intellectual Life

A prominent and effective missionary on the Congo told the writer that, other things being equal, a college graduate would last longer in Africa than one who had

not enjoyed this advantage. His interest in geology, botany, and the like, would help him to overcome that fatal tendency to utter discouragement so difficult to resist in a killing equatorial climate. Mackay of Uganda took a thousand volumes over the jungle trails to his distant interior station. They were to be a mental and moral safeguard. Paul understood the helpfulness of wide intellectual interests. He says, "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honorable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things" (Philippians 4. 8). And again he says, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom" (Colossians 3. 16). "Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer each one" (Colossians 4. 6).

The Sublimation of the Lower Impulses

Paul had never heard of the "sublimation" of our instincts, but the psychology back of this conception he thoroughly understood. He exhorts the Thessalonians to keep from fornication, and then at once urges them to love one another. Love is to be the antidote to lust (1 Thessalonians 4. 1-10). Says he, "Be not drunken with wine . . . but be filled with the Spirit." That is, in place of seeking the thrill that comes from alcohol, seek the joy that comes from the fullness of God's life in your soul. The apostle wished the Christian assemblies to be a glorious substitute for wine parties. His

ideal for the church meeting was that in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs they should sing, and make melody in their hearts to the Lord.

The importance and value of a healthy emotional life is something that our academicians and critical highbrows need to learn. Their present conventional attitude of contempt toward what they call emotionalism is psychologically unsound. God has made young people emotional, and as certain instinctive expressions of their emotional life must necessarily be repressed, there must be provided in their place a normal outlet. P. S. Winslow, the distinguished British sadhu in India, says that often the Hindu Christians' exuberant expression of their love for Christ is offensive to the Anglo-Saxon mind, but he thinks that perhaps the Hindus understand the matter better than we do, because unless a man has an emotional passion for Christ that is stronger than those fierce fires that burn in his body, the time is almost sure to come when he will have a volcanic eruption after which he must exclaim in remorse, "The things that I would not these I do: O wretched man that I am!" Economic conditions today delay marriage long after the normal time, and it is one of the chief problems of religious education to help young people through these years of strain. If they could catch Paul's glowing passion of love for Christ and his kingdom, they would have the secret of victory.

There Are Spiritual as Well as Physical Repressions

A certain type of psychologist may warn us of the

danger of a repression of the animal instincts and thus covertly condone a certain amount of sexual license, but human experience warns us of the opposite danger of failing to repress the passions under the hand of love. It was not a pious remark, but a scientific fact, when Paul said, "The wages of sin is death." And even if venereal disease does not work its dread consequences upon us, there is a fearful hardening of the nature of which Robert Burns speaks, out of his own bitter experience, in the lines:

> "I waive the quantum of the sin,
> The hazzard o' concealin'.
> But Och, it hardens all within
> And petrifies the feelin'."

A man who indulges in vice always takes spiritual syphilis, whether he contracts the physical disease or not. There is more than one kind of repression. The man who throws the bridle on the neck of his lust loses the capacity for the higher romances and thrills of life. And this is indeed a repression. Jesus speaks of that most terrible of all repressions, the sin against the Holy Ghost, where a man having deliberately stifled the higher aspirations of his nature, finally finds them atrophied so that the very tentacles by which he might take hold upon God have withered away, and there is nothing in his nature to which the Holy Spirit can appeal. And Paul has the same idea when he speaks of men who being past feeling, have given themselves up to licentiousness, "to work all uncleanness with greediness" (Ephesians 4. 19). We have the same

thought in Timothy, where it speaks of men "branded in their own conscience as with a hot iron" (1 Timothy 4. 2).

Paul Insists on the Ideal

The experience of millions of Christians is that after they accept Christ as their Saviour and honestly determine to lead a new life, they are like people recovering from infantile paralysis. The old grooved tendencies of their nature yield reluctantly and slowly to the power and control of the new life. Their purpose and spirit are new; they are born again, but they often have spells where for hours they must fight doggedly against the recurring inrush of angry thoughts and other evil tendencies. The mind runs away like an irresponsible two-year-old, and they must incessantly take it by the hand and lead it back. They find, indeed, that when in the long watches of the night they fight their evil imaginations persistently and prayerfully, that at the end a great blessing comes to them, and complete control of their thoughts, but they wonder why they cannot do it instantly, as Paul's gospel seems to suggest that they might.

It is an interesting fact that Paul makes no room for those preliminary failures to overcome the grooved habits of mind and body which are apt to humiliate the new convert. Professor James Denney says that there never was a man in whose experience there was such a sharp line of demarcation between the then and the now. Before Christ came to him there was failure and futility; after he came there was victory and efficiency.

Before Christ came the apostle was exclaiming, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" But after Christ came the word was, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made us free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh."

One may say, to begin with, that Paul had never acquired the bad mental habits that many must struggle against. As touching the righteousness which is in the law he had been found blameless. It is also altogether likely that the shock of the Damascus vision wrought, like a surgical operation, an unusually radical change in the set of his mind, and that this change was intensified by the challenge of his constant persecution and perils, and made permanent by the sternest self-discipline. The writer had a very intimate and trusted friend who before his conversion was the slave of liquor, but he testified that after his conversion he had no desire for it whatever. The sincerity of this testimony could not be doubted, and there are multiplied instances of sudden and extraordinary transformation in the mental temper of men. But with how many honest souls is the struggle with evil thoughts like an attempt to sweep back the tide! This is, of course, explained in a large number of instances by the failure to get hold of Paul's jiujitsu in the moral wrestling match. They have not learned his technique. They have, for instance, been

delivered from legalism only in a limited area of their lives. They do not look constantly to Christ. They are simply trying to be good under the influence of a Christian environment. They are seeking to overcome one besetment rather than plunge into the big program of Christ.

But even the best of men find the old evil tendencies rising up to resist the good. Suggestions are not wanting that Paul himself was conscious that there were portions of his moral acreage that had not been wholly cleared of underbrush. He was conscious of absolute abandon and passionate sincerity at all times. His life was recklessly committed to Christ. He was enjoying an enormous re-enforcement of the divine vitality. His life was a constant triumph, a series of joyful victories over the world, the flesh, and the devil. But he tells us that he had to beat his body and keep it under subjection, lest by any means, having preached to others, he himself should be a castaway. The body required beating, it did not submit to a look of command. The fact that he made a vow shows that he felt at times the necessity of wearing spiritual braces (Acts 18. 18). He counts not himself to have apprehended, nor does he deem himself already perfect, but he presses on that he may lay hold on that for which he was laid hold on by Christ. This is not a confession of sin, as though he were conscious of inner acts of disloyalty, but it is a confession of incompleteness. He groans within himself waiting for his adoption, to wit, the redemption of his body. And this may be more than a confession that he has headaches and times of weakness and pain. It

may also be a confession that his body is reluctant to yield to the complete domination of the Spirit.

But we look in vain in Paul for any suggestion on his part that the Christian should not expect perfect victory at the beginning, or should tolerate within himself any failure completely to dominate his body or control his thoughts. Paul never for one moment excused himself when he batted a foul in the game of life. His mind was always on Christ, the standard of perfection, and he knew that if he tolerated in his disciples any disposition to count on the least failure as a necessary accompaniment of their struggle for conformity to the law of God, he would greatly increase the liability to that failure and its extent. The very essence of success in Christian living is always to strive for absolute perfection. And Paul got his psychology from the Master himself, who said to his disciples, "This is my commandment, that ye love one another, even as I have loved you." And again, "Love your enemies, . . . bless them that curse you, pray for them that despitefully use you." . . . "Be therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." But Jesus at the same time made provision for the recurring sense of failure which, alas, comes so constantly upon the disciples, by instituting the Lord's Supper, wherein his sacrifice for their sins should be constantly brought to remembrance and their sense of failure cleansed away by the incoming of the new life.

Man does not exist aside from his relations.—*Lotze.*

VIII

POWER THROUGH UNION WITH THE BROTHERHOOD

NIETZSCHE was obsessed with the idea that he must develop into a superman. He felt that he was called creatively to give meaning to life, rather than to take meaning from life. To that end, said he, "I must have room." And so he isolated himself, lest men should crush out his individuality. He would only have what he called a star acquaintance with men, meaning by that that he would be related to other men as the stars are to one another, in sight of them but far distant. The result of this egoistic isolation was the madhouse. His insistence on the development of his individuality and his longing for great power were normal. His error was in not seeing that power comes from the closest union with the brotherhood, and that the superman must be, like Jesus, the superlover.

Paul was alive to the fact that all high vitality comes from union with the friends of God. Hence he taught that the Christian must at all hazards seek the companionship of the brotherhood. Strive, says the apostle, "to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." Out of this springs power, and fullness of life. And by "the unity of the Spirit" he meant, of course, the unity of love.

And back of the words of Paul are the words of

Christ himself. Our Lord seemed to have a tragic sense of the disastrous consequences of a break in friendship. He said, "If thy brother sin against thee, rebuke him; if he repent forgive him. But if he hear thee not, then go and take two or three others, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he hear them not, tell it to the church."[1] That is to say, exhaust your social resources to repair a breach in friendship. Jesus realized that such a breach leads to graver and graver consequences. We lose our brother and are liable to sin for the lack of the good influence he might have had upon us. He on his part is liable to sin for the lack of the good influence we might have had upon him, and both of us together are a center of infection from which poison spreads throughout the whole church.

Like Jesus, the apostle greatly emphasizes the importance of forbearance and mercy in order that we might with one mind and one mouth glorify God. "Forbearing one another, and forgiving each other, if any man have a complaint against any; even as the Lord forgave you, so also do ye: and above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfectness" (Colossians 3. 13, 14).

In Ephesians, in the great passage on the church, Paul says that as a result of this passion for the closest unity with all good people we shall be "no longer children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every

[1] The form of this saying of Jesus was probably somewhat modified before it was written down, but it breathes the very essence of his teaching.

wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, in craftiness, after the wiles of error" (4. 14). He realized that the only way for the church to be safe from mountebanks and all kinds of fanatical movements is for the brethren to keep together. If they do so, there will always be among them some sensible man who can puncture error and save the church from going off on a tangent.

A distinguished physician said to the writer not long ago that the perpetual problem is to maintain a proper balance of the bodily functions. A little too much thyroid secretion is dangerous, but a deficiency in the action of this gland is equally dangerous. And so with all the other glands of the body.

The church likewise is perpetually suffering from endocrine trouble. It lacks balance. If all types of people could only keep the unity of the Spirit, there would be sure to be someone to preserve the balance. And it was part of the spiritual genius of the apostle that he realized this so intensely. He knew perfectly well that most of us could not sing our part in the great hymn of the evangel save in company with the rest. But singing with others we would know instinctively when we were striking a false note by the fact that it did not harmonize, and we could feel our way back into concord with the rest.

The More Intellectual Need the Ministry of the Less Gifted

Paul believed that one way to look to Christ was to scan the face of every brother he met, and sift out all his words for some direct revelation from the

Son of God. The habit of some people greatly to stress the sacrament of bread and wine, and at the same time ignore the importance of close social relations with all the brotherhood, would have appeared to Paul the height of absurdity. He would have had no patience with the alternative which some people make between revelations of Christ which come to them directly, and revelations which come to them indirectly from the lips of others. The word of a brother which burned into Paul's conscience with a self-evidencing authority was to the apostle as direct a revelation from Christ as the most vivid vision that could come to him.

Proverbs says, "Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise." The wise man thinks we should learn even from an ant. How much more from our fellow men, however humble!

Paul had succeeded in keeping an appetite for new ideas and inspirations from the Lord as ravenous as that of a hound, and eagerly sought for inspiration from every word and look and deed of a brother Christian. The soul of man is like an ox, it must graze continuously or it will not prosper. And as it is impossible always to be in the presence of highly intellectual and fully developed saints, a man's mental and moral health depends upon his ability to make the best of the very imperfect revelations of God which he can get from the commonplace disciples who surround him. People who are so very fastidious about the kind of preaching and teaching they hear in the church must learn that they need spinach as well as T-bone steak. Jesus said to the seventy raw recruits whom he sent out to proclaim his

coming, "He that receiveth you receiveth me." And yet doubtless what they said about Jesus was mixed with much ignorance and superstition, and would often be offensive to refined ears.

We have many plain evidences in the Pauline Epistles that, in spite of the vital power of the apostolic church, there were many men who manifested the most annoying peculiarities and who tended to bore the church by their long-drawn-out testimonies. Paul insisted that at the church meetings not more than two or three should prophesy, so that the boresomeness of the meetings would not be too intense. But, on the other hand, he says, "Quench not the Spirit; despise not prophesyings." Let them talk, says Paul, to a reasonable length, even though their prophesying may be a trial to you, for they may have the very message that you need. But that, he adds, does not mean that you must believe everything they say: "Prove all things, hold fast that which is good" (1 Thessalonians 5. 19-21).

This recognition of the necessity on the part of every Christian to heed and to value the ministry of his humblest fellow Christians, was no small part of Paul's secret of power. He had a genius for extracting gold from very low-grade ore. This eager expectation of help from everybody brought out from them, indeed, a vitality of mind and soul of which they had not previously been conscious. Just because Paul believed they could inspire him they were therefore able to do so. He was what might be called a creative listener, a man who could actually produce wisdom in people by expecting it from them.

And then, on the other hand, just as Paul realized that the humblest brother was necessary for his highest vitality, he realized the supreme importance of the exercise of his own gifts. Christ was in him, and was seeking through him, as he himself says, to impart to them some spiritual gift. Hence not to exercise his own talents to the full was to rob the brotherhood as well as to stunt himself.

Love a Great Mental Stimulus

One of the best ways, suggests the apostle, to arrive at the fullness of your powers is to let the love of Christ constrain you into a great passion of charity for your fellow men. For, says Paul, if you love everybody passionately, your eagerness to help them will melt through the stubborn inertia of an untrained and unaroused mind and body, and you will ere long find yourself doing well those things which you are naturally fitted to do.

This aspect of Paul's great hymn of love has not been sufficiently brought out. The greatest of all stimulators of gifts is a passionate love for humanity. It is extraordinary how sometimes a man who has had no training in oratory becomes eloquent under the influence of a great passion for the good of his fellows. Love stimulates his latent abilities. Just as warm, moist atmosphere is good growing weather for corn, so love is good growing weather for the development of every gift with which a man is born. Hence mutual love is not merely a condition of moral safety, but of intellectual development. Sanity springs out of love. Fanaticism

is a germ which multiplies in its absence, but "love abounds more and more in knowledge and all discernment" (Philippians 1. 9).

Love Rationalizes Rather Than Suppresses the Overflowings of Emotion

On the other hand, Paul's love made him wonderfully tolerant of those manifestations of religious emotion which most people are constrained to call fanatical. He was especially patient with those who had more exultation of spirit than they had power intelligently to express. He was all the more patient with them because he himself was often bowled over with great surges of cosmic emotion which he could not articulate. I speak with tongues, says he, more than ye all. He was like a man holding a fire hose when the current is suddenly turned on, twisting it out of his hands. But immediately he sought to formulate the emotional experience into ideas that could be understood and remembered by the people.

Just as Paul would not for a moment tolerate mysticism that did not stimulate good morals, so he would not tolerate the gift of tongues unless it eventuated finally in clear ideas. He would let people explode in this peculiar ecstatic fashion if there were someone close by to interpret to the church what the man felt but could not articulate; otherwise, said the apostle, he must keep silent. There is a quaint saying in 1 Corinthians 14 where Paul insists that speaking with tongues should be reduced to a minimum. Says he, "If you speak with tongues that are unintelligible to the people, how shall

they that occupy the place of the unlearned say 'Amen'?" In the church doubtless there were many men who did not know their letters, and who from sheer ignorance could not speak in the church gatherings. But they found satisfaction and self-expression in saying "Amen." The apostle insisted that the proceedings of the Christian meeting should be of such character that these brothers would know when to chime in with their "Amen." This shows Paul's largeness of heart, and his sense that in the Church of Christ everyone should have some part in the meetings.

Who keeps one end in view makes all things serve.—*Browning.*

From that moment (when he resolved to seek a new method of scientific investigation) he had a vocation which employed and stimulated all the energies of his mind, gave a value to every vacant interval of time, an interest and significance to every random thought and casual accession of knowledge; an object to live for as wide as humanity, as immortal as the human race; an idea to live in vast and lofty enough to fill the soul forever, with religious and heroic aspirations. From that moment, though still subject to interruptions, disappointments, errors, and regrets, he would never be without either hope or work or consolation.—*James Spedding, in "The Life and Letters of Francis Bacon."*

IX

POWER THROUGH DEFINITENESS OF TASK

The Universal Need of a Conscious and Definite Mission in Life

UNAMUNO, the great Spanish philosopher, has said that the problem of the day is not the distribution of goods but the distribution of vocations. Certain it is that one of the crying needs of thousands of people is a type of work that is not slavery, but which calls out the best that is in them. It also greatly contributes to a man's zest in life to feel that his task is one of dignity and importance. A recent investigator of the attitudes of wage earners in our big industries has said that it is not small wages that hurt men so deeply, but the feeling that their job is looked down upon. But when in addition to a sense of the importance and dignity of his work, a man can feel that God has called him to that particular task, and will strengthen him for its performance, his joy and efficiency are enormously increased.

The New Testament teaches that every man can have this serene inner certitude. Thus will he be prepared for all the rebuffs and discouragements that come to him. He will also be inspired to concentrate his mind so rigorously upon his work that in time he will gain a facility and a momentum so great that nothing can stand

before him. Thousands of careers are wrecked not for the lack of industry or ability, but for the lack of that steadfast conviction that enables a man to say, "This one thing I do, and I will take all the consequences of not attempting other things, and will prune my life as ruthlessly as the successful performance of this task demands." Winston Churchill as a young man once asked Lord Balfour the secret of success. "Direction," answered the elder statesman; "multitudes fail for lack of a clear-cut aim."

Paul's Mission

This certainty of a divinely appointed task was one of the secrets of Paul's success. He made a continuous journey to his divine destination without any side trips. No time was wasted in indecision, no energy lowered by painful misgivings. He was sure of just what he was called to do and to say in the world.

In time this concentration brought it about that all his mental resources were crystallized around one great center. His mind was like a mobilized army. All his resources were available. Everything he knew paid tribute to his main purpose. He had no frozen assets. Everything he saw offered itself to further his work. His eye was single and his whole body was full of light. The more he concentrated on Christ and his gospel, the broader he became. The narrow way he followed took him to the wide view at the top of a mountain.

How Paul Found His Mission

To find himself no doubt Paul had to experiment just

as the rest of us do, but by the time he wrote the Epistle to the Galatians he had decided that from birth he was called to be an apostle. He came to this conviction through a combination of circumstances.

First, there was the providential preparation for his task which we have previously noted. He knew the whole Jewish background of the religion of Jesus, and by reason of his birth and rearing in a Gentile city he instinctively understood the background and tone of Greek thought. He was therefore fitted to be the interpreter of the one to the other.

This conviction was strengthened by a series of inner mystical experiences. Luke tells us that at his conversion Paul had a premonition of his world-wide work. Later when he made his defense before the mob at Jerusalem, Paul tells them how in a vision he had argued with the Lord that Jerusalem was the normal place for him to work; but the voice said, "Depart: for I will send thee far hence to the Gentiles."

But it was more than an inner voice that sent Paul out of Palestine. It was the compulsion of murderous persecution. He was driven out. Added to this was the fact that Barnabas, a great leader of the early church, made a long journey to find him and bring him to Antioch as one of the prophets of the great Christian movement that was branching out from that city. This conviction of Barnabas that Paul was destined to be a missionary among the Gentiles must have had great weight with the apostle himself. And when, after a time in Antioch, the conviction settled down upon the whole church that Barnabas and he should go off upon

an aggressive campaign of missionary work, Paul could count such a unanimous conviction nothing short of a leading of the Holy Spirit.

But perhaps the most impressive evidence that Paul received of his call to be an apostle to the Gentiles was the extraordinary results that came from his work. Almost at the beginning of the enterprise a Roman proconsul became a believer in Christ, and as he and Barnabas penetrated inland church after church of brave disciples was raised up as the result of their labors. The hand of God was with them.

Thus we see that outward circumstances, the inner voice, the conviction of his friends, and the results of his work, all dove-tailed together to assure the apostle of his divine mission as a pioneer preacher among the Gentiles.

Called to Be an Intellectual Pioneer

Paul was called not only to be a pioneer preacher going to places where Christ had never yet been named, but he was called to be an intellectual pioneer. And it was by his adventurous thinking that in the long run he did most for the church. God laid it on him to proclaim that Gentiles did not need to be circumcised nor to attend the Jewish feasts at Jerusalem, nor, indeed, take upon themselves any burden whatever except to love Christ with all their hearts and their neighbors as themselves. For this piece of pioneering he was persecuted to the death. But all subsequent ages have cause to bless God that Paul was not suave with the superorthodox at Jerusalem, but fought to the limit for the

right of all men of all nations to interpret Christ after their own normal fashion, if only they exalted him to the supreme place and gave themselves in unselfish love to the brotherhood.

The World Sweep of His Mission Did Not Deflect His Attention From the Individual

Paul's task was made still more definite by his realization that a world movement was to be started not by wholesale methods, but by intense concentration upon a large number of individuals. He thought of men one by one as though each were the only person in the world. This utter abandon to the individual was a great secret of his power. Men of continental tasks are apt to have a divided mind, and to feel that with vast multitudes to deal with they cannot waste their time on individuals. Their manner hangs out a sign which says, "No Goods Sold at Retail."

But while Paul centered on the individual he was always visualizing this individual as a part of a great whole which he called the body of Christ, and he did not feel that his work with him was done until he had persuaded him not merely to forsake his sins and seek personal salvation, but also to enlist in a great movement for the establishment of "the civilization of the brotherly man." Indeed, this enlistment in Paul's view was a part of salvation, and a man without a social vision was not saved.

There were many things under a cruel autocracy for which Paul could not at the time agitate. He did not, for instance, start an antislavery society; but he did all

he could to alleviate the lot of the slaves, and laid down principles which, like a burning fuse, would eventually cause an explosion that would blow up the institution.

This distinction which men are now drawing between work for the individual and work for the reforming of the social order, is a false alternative. Paul refused to take either horn of that dilemma, and he had back of him the example of Jesus, who spent most of his time talking to individuals and meeting their immediate needs, but was also constantly speaking of the kingdom of God. This, of course, was his expression for that ideal day when universal justice will be administered and the whole structure of society will get its inspiration from faith in the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man.

Nothing could be more intensely social than Jesus' vision of the kingdom of heaven. But Jesus felt that the way to reach mankind was to be high-powered enough to make your conversation with the individual a broadcast to the race. We see a perfect example of this in his conversation with the Samaritan woman. He so spoke to this ignorant villager that the centuries have listened in.

Charles Sumner is reported to have said once, "I have ceased to care for the individual; now I am only interested in great causes." Julia Ward Howe, who was in the company, retorted, "Charles, you have got beyond the Almighty himself!" Paul never got beyond the Almighty. He gave the minutest attention to individuals. He writes to the Thessalonians: "As ye know how we dealt with each one of you, as a father with his

own children, exhorting you, and encouraging you, and testifying, to the end that ye should walk worthily of God" (1 Thessalonians 2. 11, 12). And in his farewell address to the elders at Ephesus, he says: "Teaching you publicly, and from house to house, . . . I ceased not to admonish every one night and day with tears."

Once having come in contact with a brother, Paul seemed never to cease thinking of him. Men have noticed that there are no descriptions of scenery in Paul's writings, and have concluded that he must have been deficient in imagination. The absence of parables from nature and rhapsodies over the beauties of the countries which he had passed through does not prove this. But, however that may be, one thing is certain: if he did not have an imagination that reproduced scenery, he did have an extraordinarily vivid imagination to call up people. His friends separated from him by many miles seemed to be with him continually. He says to the Colossians, "For though I am absent in the flesh, I am with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ" (2. 5).

Closeness to the Individual a Powerful Mental Stimulus

This power to visualize his absent friends as though they were present greatly stimulated the mind of Paul. We all know how, when attempting in vain to collect our thoughts and formulate them in writing, a knock at the door and the entrance of a challenging friend makes it possible for us at once without apparent effort to say

what we were trying in vain to say on paper, and often so effectively that we are astonished at ourselves. His coming has cranked our stalled engine.

The habit of always doing his thinking as in the presence of the brotherhood also tended to keep Paul from those aberrations of thought to which every man is liable. The asininities of philosophical thought are due, among other causes, to the philosopher's tendency to retire into his den and spin a train of logical reasoning out of his own inner consciousness, much as a spider spins his web. If these closet philosophers had gone out and faced real human beings, and kept themselves conscious of the extreme complexity of the problems which men confront, they would have been saved from many of their errors. Nothing corrects philosophy like life.

It is a noticeable fact that when a man stands up before an audience and begins to speak in an affected and unnatural tone, he cannot as a rule look into the eyes of his audience. And even if he could, they will not let him, for they look down with embarrassment and leave him to orate to the wall. And just as speaking eye to eye keeps the speaker's delivery natural and impressive, it also helps to keep his thought correct and true. Facing a real human being with all the complications of his personality, tends to keep a man from getting away from reality.

Thinking of Men One by One Increased Paul's Influence Over Them

Paul's influence was enormously increased by the fact that people were conscious that even when he was in a

distant city, he was thinking of them. This realization not only made them love him, but it challenged them to loyalty to the Christ whom he represented.

His letters contain many delightful personal greetings phrased with the deftest courtesy. He does not merely repeat conventional phrases, but adapts his greeting to each one. Says he: "Salute Prisca and Aquila my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, who for my life laid down their own necks; unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles: and salute the church that is in their house. Salute Epaenetus my beloved, who is the first fruits of Asia unto Christ. Salute Mary, who bestowed much labor on you. Salute Andronicus and Junias, my kinsmen, and my fellow prisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also have been in Christ before me. Salute Ampliatus my beloved in the Lord. Salute Urbanus our fellow worker in Christ, and Stachys my beloved. Salute Apelles the approved in Christ. Salute them which are of the household of Aristobulus" (Romans 16. 3-10).

Paul takes special pains to send his greetings to the slaves who formed no small part of the church membership. When, as above, he says, "Salute them which are of the household of Aristobulus," he means the slaves that were owned by Aristobulus. When he sends Onesimus, the runaway slave, back to Philemon, he says in the accompanying letter to the Colossians, "I have sent [with Tychicus] . . . Onesimus, the faithful and beloved brother who is one of you." He insisted that the Epistle to the Colossians should be read

to all the brethren, which included, of course, the slaves who for one reason or another had been prevented from being at the church meeting where the letter was first read.

When Paul forgets the names of certain brethren to whom he wishes to send greetings, he refers to them with gracious tact as those whose names are in the book of life. Paul was an exquisite gentleman, which simply means that he was a man who treated each person whom he met as worthy of respect and kindness. This deference for the individual, of course, was intensified by his belief that Christ had not only died for him and put him under immeasurable obligation to be kind to all the brotherhood, but he had also died for them and thus assured the world that they too were unspeakably precious in his sight. The love of Christ made the outward forms of politeness fervently and passionately real for Paul. And one may say, in passing, that this is a good definition of Christianity. It is the religion that makes the outward forms of courtesy the sincere expression of the heart.

Paul's warm social spirit became contagious. Other disciples were warmed by the new spirit of unity and friendship. In Romans his stenographer is caught in the current and says, "I Tertius, who write the epistle, salute you in the Lord." He wanted them to know that he was a Christian too, and sent them a brother's greeting. When the Spirit of Christ prevails, every book that comes into our hands, and every letter, will seem to contain greetings not only from its ostensible author, but also from the typist and the linotype man and the

proofreader and the printer and the binder, and all who have had a part in the work. Thus life will be personalized and enriched.

In order to win men to Christ and encourage them to endure the persecution and ostracism that would result, it was necessary that Paul should love them more than anyone else had ever loved them, and that he should show them a gracious courtesy and fascinating kindness that they had never seen before. In addition to that, it was necessary that he should bring it about that the group into which they were invited would furnish them a type of friendship and social inspiration in the highest degree attractive. This Paul accomplished. He was the type and example of an altogether delightful friend, and from him the spirit of brotherhood spread like a contagion. Jesus had said, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." And Paul might have added, "Hereby shall all men be seized with a desire to become my disciples when they see how great a privilege it will be to join such a joyous and inspiring brotherhood."

Paul Created Love for Himself by Taking for Granted the Love of Others

Paul not only constantly expressed to his friends the burning affection which he had for them, but he also assumed that they had a similar affection for him. In writing to Philemon, for instance, he assumes that Philemon is earnestly praying that Paul may be permitted to visit him. "But withal," says he, "prepare me also a lodging: for I hope that through your prayers

I shall be granted unto you." He assumes that the Ephesians are suffering deeply on account of the afflictions which had befallen him, and he says, "Wherefore I ask that ye may not faint at my tribulations for you, which are your glory."

This assumption that the disciples returned his great affection for them was doubtless often disappointed, but in thousands of instances Paul's childlike assumption that people loved him actually created that love. Little children have a way of running to us with the belief that we are "just dying to see them," and this childish confidence in our love makes our hearts and our arms go out in an answering welcome. If a friend, assuming that we are anxious to see him, travels miles out of his way to make us a brief call, this act kindles afresh in us the flame of an old friendship that was beginning to burn low.

Here we have another side of Paul's doctrine of salvation by faith. Men are saved not merely by their faith in the love of Christ and his representatives, but they are also saved when we show them that we have faith that they love in return.

Manual Labor an Adjunct to Paul's High Calling

Paul felt that he had received directly from heaven a supreme revelation which would turn the course of history. He knew that he was called to an exalted function in the kingdom of God. And yet we see him working as an ordinary mechanic to support himself and his young assistants. In the eyes of the upper classes of the first century this manual labor was degrading. It

was the part of a slave. And yet it was Paul's policy to live by such labor, and, instead of showing shame, rather to boast of it. He was thus delivered from the suspicion of carrying on his missionary labor with mercenary motives. No one could accuse him of making gain by the gospel. Furthermore, to work with one's hands, and thus serve the community rather than exploit it, was a form of preaching the gospel. Horny hands were an evangel to a world made up of so many people who were living on the unrequited toil of their fellow men.

There is a paradox here, as there so often is in Paul's life. Since Jesus perhaps no one has ever lived who had such an exalted sense of his august function in the kingdom of God. And yet there was no service so lowly that he was unwilling to perform it. Nothing in the way of burden-bearing was beneath his dignity. In fact, his self-supporting policy was a part of his dignity. He deemed it altogether beneath him to let patient souls toil to keep him at ease. And this lowliness was manifest not merely in willingness to earn his own bread, but in that patient, house-to-house visitation which was necessary in order to win back wavering members of the church. "Ye yourselves know," says he to the Ephesian elders, "from the first day that I set foot in Asia, after what manner I was with you all the time, serving the Lord with all lowliness of mind, . . . teaching you publicly and from house to house." It was part of the very essence of Christianity that its representatives should perform lowly services to which the proud world would not stoop. When Jesus had

washed the disciples' feet, and told them that they likewise should be servants one of another, he added, "If ye know these things, blessed are ye if ye do them." Paul had entered into that blessing, and that consequent influence over his fellow men which always comes when one sacrifices his false dignity in order to serve.

Pray for my soul. More things are wrought by prayer
Than this world dreams of. Wherefore, let thy voice
Rise like a fountain for me night and day,
For what are men better than sheep or goats
That nourish a blind life within the brain,
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer
Both for themselves and those who call them friend?
For so the whole round earth is every way
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God.

—Alfred Tennyson.

X

POWER THROUGH PRAYER

Paul Constantly Prayed for All His Friends Both Far and Near

PAUL'S intense interest in his friends was accompanied by fervent prayer. After the address to the Ephesian elders Luke tells us that he kneeled down and prayed with them all (Acts 20). By this he suggests that Paul took up the case of each one of them and gave thanks for his virtues, prayed for help in his special troubles and tribulations, and gently sought the aid of Christ for his weaknesses. This he doubtless did continually as he went from house to house visiting the brethren.

But while Paul prayed constantly for those with whom he was living and working, one is especially impressed by the fact that his prayers went up like a fountain day and night for those who were far distant from him. It is interesting to note in the Epistles the content of his prayers. He writes to the Philippians: "And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and all discernment; so that ye may approve the things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and void of offense unto the day of Christ; being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are through Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God" (1. 9-11).

To the Ephesians he writes: "For this cause I bow

my knees unto the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, that ye may be strengthened with power through his Spirit in the inward man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; to the end that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be strong to apprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge, that ye may be filled unto all the fullness of God" (3. 14-19).

His prayers, Paul tells us, were persistent and intense. In his letter to the Thessalonians he calls God to witness how that night and day he prayed exceedingly that he might see their face, and perfect that which is lacking in their faith. And he exhorts them on their part also to pray without ceasing. To the Ephesians he says, "Take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: with all prayer and supplication praying at all seasons in the Spirit, and watching thereunto in all perseverance and supplication for all the saints" (6. 17, 18).

In this persistency of his prayer Paul has back of him the teachings of our Lord. In the parable of the unjust judge Jesus taught that the worst kind of a judge would finally heed the weakest and most ineffective petitioner if only she were persistent enough; and how much more would the good God who loves his children and is eager to bless them, respond to their urgent petitions! In the parable of the friend at midnight Jesus shows that a reluctant and irritated friend at the most

inconvenient hour of the twenty-four will rise and grant a favor just to get rid of the man who keeps at him long enough; and he would have us say to ourselves, "How much more will my Heavenly Father, to whom no time is inconvenient, and who is more willing to give than I am to receive, respond to my persistent prayer!"

Some might ask, "What is the difference between incessant prayer and vain repetition?" And the answer is: The distinction is world-wide. Vain repetition is the mere repeating of phrases which do not express the consuming desire of the soul. The incessant prayer that Jesus and Paul enjoined was prayer that carried with it the whole passion of the man's personality, prayer that was alert and watchful, and which called the mind into the fullest activity.

Paul's Prayers Not Mere Gymnastics

Again, to Paul prayer is celestial diameters from a mere gymnastic that serves to work us up by autosuggestion into a good mood. He believed that mighty objective results were wrought by prayer, and out of this faith came the extraordinary accomplishments of his life. A penniless and persecuted wanderer, he established churches in all parts of the Roman Empire and turned the course of human history. And back of Paul's faith that prayer is more than a mere gymnastic is also the teaching and example of Jesus himself, who told his disciples that if they had faith as a grain of mustard seed, they could move not merely moods but mountains, and then he himself pro-

ceeded to move mountains by overcoming the dire defeat of his rejection and crucifixion and rising to supreme authority as the spiritual leader and Saviour of the race.

Paul's Prayers Mingled With Thanksgivings

One of the most beautiful aspects of Paul's prayers for his friends is that he continually gave thanks for their good qualities. Perhaps that is one of the reasons why he succeeded in praying for them with such persistence. It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord; it is pleasant, and praise is comely. There is no more delightful exercise than to go over the list of our friends and thank God for their good qualities. With one exception Paul begins all his letters by telling the churches of the qualities in them for which he continually gives joyful thanks. His prayer life was not in the minor key of perpetual plaintive begging, but in the major key of doxology. And his recognition at the beginning of his prayers for his friends that God had done so much for them already, greatly strengthened his faith that he would do more.

Another peculiarity of Paul's prayers is their sheer idealism. He never prays for mere respectability, but always for perfection and glory. And in this he has back of him the Lord Jesus, who taught us to pray not that this should become a decent world, but that the will of God should be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Paul Prayed About Everything

But, of course, Paul prayed for himself as well as

for his friends. In his own life he carried out his injunction to the Philippians, "In nothing be anxious, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God." Notice he does not say *for* everything, but *in* everything. Paul was not one of those superficial optimists who try to believe that everything that happens to them comes from God. On the contrary, he tells Timothy that Alexander the coppersmith did him much evil. And he writes to the Thessalonians, "We would fain have come unto you, I Paul once and again; and Satan hindered us." He could not thank God for the hindering of Satan, but he found no condition so bad that there was not left to him much reason for thanksgiving. If robbers stole the money necessary for his missionary journey, he would at least give thanks that it was beyond their power to rob him of the pearl of great price.

Every physical need and anxiety was at once taken to God in prayer. We are sure that Paul did not childishly demand luxuries and insist that all his wishes be fulfilled. But while he was not peremptory in his demands for the things of the body, there can be no manner of doubt that he prayed about them all, and thus had his anxiety allayed and his faith strengthened. He was speaking out of his own experience when he said to the Philippians that as a result of constant prayer and thanksgiving the peace of God which passeth all understanding would guard their hearts and their thoughts in Christ Jesus. And this peace meant clear vision. Prayer like a windshield wiper constantly oper-

ated to keep the mists from gathering before his eyes. Its atmosphere sustained him like a bracing climate.

We cannot doubt that Paul's amazing ability to survive hardships and dangers was due, in no small part, to the fact that by the grace of God he was free from worry, and delivered from the fear of death. Men would live a great deal longer if they were not afraid of disease and death. Rufus Jones tells us that after an automobile accident he thought he was dying, but found at this crisis that all fear of death was removed, and thereafter he was conscious of a great accession of energy. In the midst of the stormiest and most disconcerting scenes Paul attained to an imperturbable calm by his habit of perpetual prayer and thanksgiving.

The fact that Paul, by his word and his example, so perfectly reflects the teachings of Jesus on prayer suggests that his prayer life was fed by the heartening words of our Lord. He says, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly;" and he precedes his exhortation to constant prayer by the words, "Take the . . . sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." Doubtless he followed his own advice in this matter. It was the promises of Jesus and the prophets that fueled his engine of faith for its upward flight.

The Apostle Depended Solely on the Divine Mercy

One reason for the joyful exuberance of Paul's prayer life was that his prayers were never a penance. He would have recoiled from the thought of assigning any poor sinner the task of repeating the Lord's Prayer so many times every day for a week as an expiation for

his sins, and we can believe that he never imposed such a penance upon himself. His prayers were always adventures upon the divine compassion. Like the psalmist he prayed,

"Have mercy upon me, O God; according to thy loving kindness;
According to the multitude of thy tender mercies, blot out my transgressions."

And out of that multitude of God's tender mercies there always looked down upon him the thorn-crowned head of Jesus heartening him, and making God's mercy real. He never made any strained attempt to establish his credit at the bank of heaven, for the Saviour had signed in advance all the checks that he presented. This point, which seems so obvious, is precisely the point that numberless petitioners miss, and miss completely, and that just after they have glibly accepted the doctrine as a matter of course. The form of their prayer professes sole dependence on the grace of God, but a subtle legalism paralyzes their faith. It often happens that nothing is so far from our practical grasp as the truth to which in theory we have given unquestioning adherence from our youth up. "The obvious is that which is so near to us that we never see it." Paul no more felt that he must acquire merit before he prayed than we would feel it necessary to present letters of recommendation to the fire department before we broke the glass and pulled the key that mobilized the resources of the city to quench the flames devouring our house.

Paul Prayed in the Spirit

Our prayers and supplications, says Paul (in the passage we have quoted), are to be in the Spirit. That is, they are to be uttered in dependence on the Spirit and under the guidance of the Spirit. And in Romans 8. 26 he adds a mysterious and rather startling statement:

"And in like manner the Spirit also helpeth our infirmity: for we know not how to pray as we ought; but the Spirit himself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered; and he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God."

This passage on the face of it seems absurd. The Spirit is God, but nevertheless the Spirit in our heart maketh intercession to God with groanings which cannot be uttered. This was Paul's glorious way of stressing the perfect union of God with man. In Christ Jesus the Spirit becomes, as it were, a part of us, and is so sympathetic with our desires for higher things that the Spirit himself prays to God for us. One has watched a mother, as a little child just learning to speak attempts to ask for something, and has noticed the struggle of co-operation in the mother's face as the little one strives to articulate his request. Thus it is with God, says Paul.

These wonderful words are more than theory. They are founded on Paul's constant experience. In his weakness and illness and utter depression a mysterious force seemed to take hold of him and lift him up on the wings of prayer. He did not first ascend to God; the Father

descended to him and lifted him upon wings as eagles. Then, indeed, he could run and not be weary; he could walk and not faint.

Paul's experience is symbolized by the story of Jesus at the pool of Bethesda (John 5), where the Master did not wait for the paralytic to ask for healing, but came to him and said, "Wouldest thou be made whole?" The Holy Spirit took the initiative in Paul's prayer life and hence made it supremely vital.

We are, of course, not to infer that everything he asked for was granted in just the form in which he asked it. God is too good for that. Jesus himself prayed thrice in Gethsemane, "If it be possible, let this cup pass from me." But instead an angel was sent to strengthen him. So Paul prayed thrice that his thorn in the flesh might be removed, but instead he heard a voice saying, "My grace is sufficient for thee."

And this brings us to a study of Paul's attitude toward those frustrations of his life which seemed to put the lie to God's care for him.

Thou hast been
As one, in suffering all, that suffers nothing,
A man that fortune's buffets and rewards
Hath taken with equal thanks; and blessed are those
Whose blood and judgment are so well commingled
That they are not a pipe for fortune's finger
To sound what stop she please.

—*Hamlet, Act III, Scene 2.*

XI

MAKING HANDICAPS A STEPPING-STONE TO POWER

Troubles Not Merely to Be Borne But to Be Used

If there ever was a man who understood the meaning back of the words of Jesus, "Every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit," that man was Paul. He was an expert in utilizing the prunings of Providence for his own good and for the spread of the gospel. He seemed to regard handicaps as in a sense advantages. He took the same attitude toward them that a man selling lifeboats might take toward a storm that gave him a good opportunity to demonstrate the ability of his boat to cope with the waves.

The Saviour whom Paul proclaimed had been persecuted and crucified, and rose again from the dead the third day. And whenever one of his witnesses could endure persecution and by the grace of God rise above it, that made his testimony to a risen Christ so much the more impressive. Hence Paul says: "Working together with him we entreat also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain; . . . in everything commending ourselves, as ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in watchings, in fastings; . . . by glory and dishonor, by evil report and

good report; as deceivers, and yet true; as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things."

A Mob Turned Into a Stage Setting

Let us illustrate Paul's words by his own life. After the terrible beating in Philippi he and Silas were put into the inner prison and their feet made fast in the stocks. And at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing praises to God, and the prisoners were listening to them. The two missionaries were giving an illustration of the grace of God before the poor, despairing and heartsick inhabitants of the jail. Doubtless that was one of the most impressive jail meetings ever held, because the leaders of the meeting were fellow prisoners and were suffering greater things than any who listened to them.

Later on Paul was the victim of another infuriated mob in the precincts of the Temple at Jerusalem. Just as they were about to beat him to death the soldiers rescued him and carried him on their shoulders through the crowd and up the castle steps. As they were entering into the castle Paul quietly asked the captain for leave to address the multitude. It was such an unusual request under the circumstances that the captain, curious to hear what he would say, gave him permission. And so Paul stretched forth his hand and beckoned to the crowd, and suddenly there was made a great silence. Thus Paul had an opportunity of preaching to a vast

multitude of his fellow Jews under circumstances so dramatic and impressive that they could never forget it. And, of course, within a few hours the whole city heard about his sermon.

A Trial at Law Turned Into a Preaching Service

We see the same audacious use of another dangerous situation when Paul turned his hearing before Felix into a preaching service, and reasoned with him and his guilty wife "concerning righteousness, self-control and a judgment to come," so that Felix trembled. We see it also in his hearing before Agrippa, when he gave his witness with such power that Festus became excited and tried to shake off the spell of the apostle, crying with a loud voice, "Paul, thou art mad; thy much learning hath turned thee round unto raving madness."

But Paul, undaunted, said, "I am not mad, most excellent Festus; but speak forth words of truth and soberness. For the king knoweth of these things, unto whom also I speak freely: for I am persuaded that none of these things is hidden from him; for this hath not been done in a corner. King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets?" King Agrippa said unto Paul, "With but little persuasion thou wouldest fain make me a Christian." And Paul said, "I would to God, that whether with little or with much, not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, might become such as I am, except these bonds." Thus Paul turned a hearing that was to determine the nature of the charges that would be brought against him before Nero, into a superb opportunity to preach the gospel not merely to

Felix and Agrippa, but to all the leading men of the city.

In using desperate situations for proclaiming his message Paul was obeying the command of Jesus, who said, "When they shall bring you before governors and kings for my name's sake, let it turn unto you for a testimony. That is to say, use your arrest and trial for a chance to glorify me, and I will give you a mouth and a wisdom that none of your adversaries will be able to gainsay." We must never forget that Paul, like all others who are fully committed to the gospel, had a supernatural reenforcement at these times of special danger and trial.

Imprisonment Made an Opportunity for Literary Work

But Paul utilized his misfortunes not merely at dramatic moments when his blood was stirred, but amid the deadly monotony of imprisonment. It is to his imprisonment that we owe the Epistles to the Ephesians and the Colossians and the Philippians. As Dan Crawford says somewhere, it required imprisonment to let out the imprisoned music of the gospel which we have in these letters. George Adam Smith notes that Colossians and Ephesians especially bear evidence of prolonged leisure. Their structure is elaborate and exceedingly compressed, such as would be possible to a man who had abundant time for their composition.

And Paul certainly did not neglect the opportunity which contact with his guards afforded him. He tells us in the letter to the Philippians, "My bonds became manifest in Christ throughout the whole praetorian

guard." That is to say, all of these soldiers had come to understand that he was a prisoner of conscience. And doubtless also they had come to know something about the gospel for which he was in chains.

One of the reasons why Paul was able to utilize his beating and imprisonment for the spread of the gospel was that he had formed the habit of utilizing even half a chance to get his message across. He is speaking from experience when he says to the Colossians, "Redeem the time"—or, as some translate it, "Buy up the opportunity." "Do this," says Paul, "because the days are evil." Perfectly convenient opportunities rarely ever come. You must take the inconvenient opportunity, and take it quickly, lest you have no opportunity at all. Bishop Thoburn once said that on some days opportunities to proclaim Christ to those whom he met seemed to come naturally at every turn. On other days the opportunities did not seem to be present. At length he learned that the difference was in him. Paul's mind was more and more magnetized, as the years went by, to pick up these chances for witnessing to Christ.

Paul rejoiced that through his imprisonment the brethren, instead of being intimidated, were all the bolder to proclaim the word of God without fear. This was probably due to the utterly fearless way in which Paul used his imprisonment for proclaiming the gospel. When he arrived in Rome to await his trial before Caesar, as soon as he had selected a lodging, he committed the indiscretion of sending messengers to all the unbelieving Jews in Rome, asking them to come to his

house on a certain day. Nothing more imprudent could be conceived of, for the chief priests in Judea, having once gotten rid of him, seem to have dropped his case, and the Roman Jews knew nothing about the accusation against him. To call them for a conference wherein he preached the gospel to them would tend, as he well knew, to stir some of them up against him. Ordinary caution would suggest that he let sleeping dogs alone; but instead of that, at once he calls them together and proclaims his message. This audacity in the face of danger seems to have had a stimulating effect on all the brethren.

Making Kindling Wood Out of the Devil's Arrows

Paul did not believe God planned that the forces of evil should shoot at him their fiery arrows, but he did believe that God would always show him how to take these arrows and make of them kindling wood for the fire which cooked his food. He says in Romans, "We know that to them that love God all things work together for good, even to them that are called according to his purpose" (8. 28). That is to say, however evil men and the very devil himself may seek to mutilate our lives, they will be restrained to this extent that they will not be allowed to do anything that cannot by faith and love be transformed into a blessing.

There is a startling paradox in the teachings of Jesus on this subject. Immediately after he said, "The very hairs of your head are all numbered," he adds, "Some of you they will put to death." Jesus knew that he was speaking a paradox, but this is the only way he could

express the fact that in spite of every cruel misfortune that may come to the faithful servant of God, he will suffer no real harm. Every tragedy can be transformed into blessing if only he confront it with faith.

The Secret of Contentment

But it was not merely the more dramatic tragedies of his life over which Paul had gained the mastery; he had learned to reign over the more commonplace, but at times more disheartening, handicap of poverty. He says, "I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therein to be content; I know how to be abased, and I know also how to abound; in everything and in all things have I learned the secret both to be filled and to be hungry, both to abound and to be in want. I can do all things in him that strengtheneth me" (Philippians 4. 11-13).

Back of this contentment with privation was Paul's absolute faith that he was doing what God intended him to do, and hence that, being in the plan of God, he would be protected by the providence of God. This faith, as Professor Oman suggests, is the very essence of real monotheism.[1] He believed that his Heavenly Father would allow him to suffer no lack which could not be turned into a spiritual advantage both for himself and for others. He knew that if he demonstrated to men the power of the gospel to make a man happy and to give him a kind of imperial dignity in spite of his poverty, he would have a message of wider appeal

[1] John Oman, *The Natural and the Supernatural.* The Macmillan Company, New York. P. 448.

than one which came from a man living in comfort and ease.

Paul speaks of this ability to be content with his lot, whether it was poverty or plenty, as a blessed secret into which he had been initiated by the Christ who knew not where to lay his head, and who went about preaching the secret of happiness and dignity in spite of poverty and persecution.

Of course it must be understood, when Paul says he has learned the secret of being content in whatsoever state he finds himself, that he means the inevitable conditions. No man was less content with evil conditions which could be bettered by industry and effort. In this same letter he tells the church how that, forgetting the things which are behind, and stretching forward to the things which are before, he presses on toward the goal unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

Physical Weakness a Stimulus to Utilize Unexplored Resources of God's Power

But Paul has learned not merely to be content with poverty, but to rejoice in weakness. He says to the Corinthians, "Wherefore I take pleasure in weaknesses, in injuries, . . . in distresses." One can see how a man might glory in surmounting the difficulties heaped upon him by a hostile environment, but how can a man glory in physical weakness, in tired nerves, and depleted vitality?

We may be sure that Paul did not seek for these physical conditions. If he had not learned to take the

best possible care of his health, he could scarcely have succeeded in surviving his dreadful hardships. But in spite of this Paul was a constant sufferer. It was because of an infirmity of the flesh that he preached the gospel the first time to the Galatians. We know nothing of the nature of this infirmity. Professor Ramsay thinks it was a malarial fever which he caught in the southern coastlands of Asia Minor, and that he was accordingly forced to go to the highland of Galatia to recuperate. However that may be, he had a thorn in the flesh, and it was no merely insignificant affliction, but something that tormented him and was annoying to others. He besought the Lord thrice that it might depart from him, but he tells us he heard a voice saying, "My grace is sufficient for thee." That is to say, Paul after his prayer was conscious of an unusual supply of the grace of God that gave him power to work in spite of his affliction. He discovered in time that some of the most remarkable manifestations of the Spirit came upon him and upon those to whom he preached when he was profoundly depressed and physically helpless. He went before an audience with a brain so weary that he could not formulate his thoughts, and then all at once in a mysterious fashion he was re-enforced and often spoke much better than usual. This happened not once but again and again, so that he learned to expect some peculiar manifestation of grace when he was at his wits' end.

This, of course, does not for a moment mean that Paul did not seek to come before an audience rested and physically fit, and with his thoughts coherent and

articulated. It does mean that when in times of special weariness and weakness he was driven to unusual and utter dependence upon God, he discovered sources of power that he had not previously known.

Paul had as an example the experience of Christ, for when Jesus was so dizzy with hunger that it seemed as though he would die of sheer exhaustion in the desert, and the tempter came to him with the proposition that he should use his supernatural power to lift himself out of the plane of need and poverty on which his disciples must live, he said, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." He meant that whenever we are suffering extreme deprivation of some sort, it is a hint from God that we are to tap some higher resources that will be more than a substitute for our need. When Jesus resisted this temptation, we are told that angels came and ministered to him, and Paul and multitudes of others have experienced the same blessing. They likewise have been conscious of such a mysterious refreshment that they could only attribute it to supernatural sources.

Of course we are to read between the lines and understand that deprivation and want forced Paul not only to pray and trust more desperately, but also to put forth all the energies of his will. This characteristically he does not mention. God must have all the glory. Indeed, in Paul's mind hard and hopeful work in the face of a desperate situation was only a form of faith in God.

You cannot cloud the prospects of humanity and leave its motives unclouded.—*Lynn Harold Hough.*

XII

THE DYNAMIC OF A GREAT HOPE

I. Paul's Deliverance From Fear

Much of Paul's power of endurance and his freshness of spirit came from the hope that thrilled him at all times. Paul was not afraid of the future. We know, said he, that to them that love God all things work together for good.

A large portion of mankind live in perpetual terror of being bewitched or of falling a prey to the malice of some evil spirit, or even the capricious enmity of the great god himself. The emotions of savage tribes are notably unstable. Tempests of fear come upon them like a cyclone. Warneck tells us of the amazing emotional transformation of a certain Batek in Sumatra when at last the missionaries convinced him that he could actually depend upon God to be kind and faithful to him at all times. Even an educated Mohammedan confessed to a college president in the Levant that he could never get over the feeling that at the last moment Allah might say to him, "I damn you just because I feel like it!"

Paul and his fellow Christians were blessedly free from this consuming dread. They believed that the universe was in the hands of Him who died and rose again. No one can realize how much it meant for the early church to believe the truth of the words of Jesus, "All

power is given unto me in heaven and on earth" (Matthew 28. 18).

Paul believed in the reality of the powers of darkness; but he was sure that those who trusted Christ had nothing to fear from them. The shield of faith would protect the believer from all the fiery darts of the evil one (Ephesians 6. 10-20). Neither would any cosmic accident wreck them. "For I am persuaded," says Paul, "that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8. 31-39).

One is disposed to pause here. Quite apart from any spiritual benefit, this deliverance from fear has had an enormous effect on the mental and physical health of mankind. It has been a sanitarium for sick minds. Paul's absolute freedom from superstitious terror made him a man around whom people crowded for refuge, as the sheep of Palestine crowd around their shepherd whenever a honking automobile or any other frightful object draws near. President W. F. Warren used to say that the filling of the heavens with dragons and hobgoblins, characteristic of some nations, might justly be called a type of national insanity. The religion of Jesus is the sovereign cure for this racial psychosis.

In his personal fearlessness and in his constant efforts to quell the fears of others, Paul was following in the footsteps of Jesus, who told his disciples to fear nothing but God, and in the same breath assured them that God was infinite love and faithfulness (Luke 12. 4-7). Jesus

sought to drive out fear by fear. The fear of offending almighty Love was his antidote to the fear of malevolence.

II. Paul's Hope for the Return of Christ

Of all the convictions that inspired the zeal of the apostle Paul, his ardent hope of the coming of Christ would be pronounced by many as the least transferable to the modern mind, and the least capable of being set up as a dynamo to run our moral machinery. We may be pardoned therefore for treating this doctrine a little more at length.

Why Hope for the Coming of a Christ Already an Abiding Presence With the Church?

Men are often puzzled to know what the New Testament means by promising that Christ will come, seeing that it constantly affirms that he is present with his disciples whenever they believe in him and receive him as the Lord of life. Indeed, the New Testament writers had a sense of Christ's personal presence which we can scarcely realize. They, for instance, made little or no distinction between the authority of that which Christ said to men with his lips of flesh while in Galilee, and the authority of the words he spoke in vision to Peter on the housetop (Acts 10), or to John on the Isle of Patmos (Revelation 1. 9-20). Pentecost to them was a direct word of Christ. And Paul of all men had this conviction that Christ himself had spoken to him face to face (Acts 22. 12-18); and he adds, "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I that live,

but Christ liveth in me: and that life which I now live in the flesh, I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself up for me" (Galatians 2. 20). In the most vital and mystical sense Paul had obeyed his own instructions, "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 13. 14).

What, then, can he mean by his hope of Christ's coming, seeing that Christ was already with him?

Paul expected Christ to be manifested in two aspects at his coming. First, in the collapse before the eyes of all men of those institutions which are built up in defiance of his principles. When a great nation scouts the Sermon on the Mount, and seeks to achieve mastery over the world by the sword, the collapse of that nation is, according to the New Testament, a coming of Christ. That is to say, it is a demonstration in a visible and tangible fashion that Christ is a living power in the world. The awful calamity that came upon our civilization in the World War was a demonstration to the most unspiritual man that a social order built upon lying diplomacy, military force, and commercial exploitation, is contrary to the laws of the universe. Whenever God's dynamite blows up anything that is contrary to the teachings of Jesus, that is a Parousia, a manifestation of his presence, a coming of Christ.

But that, of course, is only one side of his appearance. A coming of Christ is also any outward exaltation and glorification of men and institutions that have been in harmony with him. Jesus said of the last day, "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father" (Matthew 13. 43). And Paul

added, "When Christ, who is our life, shall be manifested, then shall ye also with him be manifested in glory" (Colossians 3. 4; compare Romans 8. 19; Philippians 3. 20).

A coming of Christ, then, is any event which, by the destruction of the evil or the glorification of the good, demonstrates to men that his principles, instead of being the theories of a dreamer, are, like gravitation, a part of the natural law of the universe. And each preliminary coming of Christ is a promise of a supreme and more glorious coming at the end of the age.

One is often asked, Do you believe in the personal return of our Lord? If Christ is a Person, there could not be any other kind of a return. But the personal return does not mean necessarily that he returns reincarnated in some one physical body. The teachings of Paul are free of any suggestion that Jesus was to return in the flesh and reign at Jerusalem, and Jesus himself said, "Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not. For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be" (Matthew 24. 26, 27). Mighty events will cause the world as with a sudden lightning flash of illumination to realize the glorious presence of Christ everywhere and in all things.

The Biblical Pictures Symbols, and Not Blue-Prints of the Future

Isaiah visualized the coming Christ as a great king

who would oppose and put down Tiglath-Pileser, the Assyrian monarch who was creeping up like a tiger on western Asia. Later, during the exile, the great day was pictured as a time when Babylon would go down, and they would return to their native land and obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing would flee away. And so from time to time the form of the hope varied, for every age must picture its ideal of the day of the Lord in terms of its own deepest needs and frame it in its very imperfect knowledge of the universe.

When Jesus came he was very different from many of the pictures painted by the prophets, and the unspiritual and literal-minded were dreadfully disappointed. Indeed, they crucified him as a blasphemous impostor. But Jesus was actually more glorious than the gorgeous prophetic canvases portrayed. The Christ who went about among the poor, healing all that were oppressed of the devil, and who then died upon the cross praying for his enemies, was a far greater blessing than the Christ whom the prophets pictured sitting on a throne and reigning over his enemies. His spiritual throne far outshone their dreams.

Likewise the supreme manifestation of Christ will doubtless be different in outward form from that which Paul portrayed in his apocalyptic visions. It should be noted, in passing, that Paul's horizon, like that of all of the New-Testament writers, stretched beyond this world. He sees in the future more than a glorified earth. The apostles were not content with an ideal social order that left out the saints and the martyrs who had died in preceding ages. Hence their conception of

the age to come, like their conception of God, had in it a big element of the transcendental. For this reason their pictures could be no more than symbols of that which they themselves could not visualize. This point is in need of strong emphasis.

The Scientists' Eager Expectation of Revolutionary Discoveries Rebukes the Church's Dimmed Hope of the Revealing of Christ

We are prone to reject the hope of the second coming because it is presented to us in apocalyptic and cataclysmic language. Men put it aside as unscientific, and talk as though they expected our religious development to go on sleepily through countless ages until at length by the process of evolution the race attains to a higher goal. But in this feeling that nothing in particular will happen, we are rebuked by the example of the scientists themselves. As we listen to the physicists and chemists with their almost breathless expectation of marvelous discoveries soon to be made, we are shamed for our lack of faith in the coming revelations of Christ. These high priests of science seem to say to us: "In our laboratories we are constantly experimenting with eager hope and great expectation; most of our experiments have negative results, but now and again we are astonished by the revelation of a wonder. Why are you not experimenting with equally thrilled expectations? Have you less faith in the power of the spiritual atom than we have in the physical atom? Do you deem the spiritual laws of the universe less fraught with potencies than the physical laws?"

In What Form Can the Hope of the Coming Be Most Real to Us?

It would seem that this expectation that God will reveal marvelous things to us as the result of eager experimentation, is the form in which for the moment we can most easily feel something of the great hopes of the New Testament. Paul urges, "Be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God." We are to discover God's resources by experimentation.

The great spiritual comings of Christ that have amazed the world have all appeared after some man with fervent prayer and invincible patience has experimented in the realm of spirit, and been meet by God with a revelation which pointed out new possibilities of grace for the race. And these spiritual discoveries almost always come after a long series of experiments with negative results. It is with them as it is in physical science. We have all frequently heard of the way in which a scientist or an inventor struggling with a problem seemed hopelessly to fail, and then in a moment the solution was unexpectedly flashed on him as though a friendly spirit had whispered it into his ears.

Of course we cannot by our own efforts bring in the Kingdom. Jesus said, "It is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." It comes as a grace from above. The New Jerusalem is let down from God out of heaven, and those who receive it do not feel that they have made a scientific discovery, but, rather, bow their heads in adoration and awe, and exclaim, like the

inventor of the electric telegraph, "What hath God wrought!"

The Revelations of the Past Justify Great Expectations

When we consider the marvelous spiritual advances that have already been made, our faith is strengthened to expect far greater revelations. The day was when intelligent and devout people felt that they must go to the herd and select a bullock or a lamb to sacrifice in connection with their prayers, otherwise they could not be heard. But now men know beyond a peradventure that God will hear them anywhere without sacrifice and without priest. What a revolutionary discovery is that! And it is in harmony with Scripture to believe that there are still unsearchable riches in Christ and that men will continue to find in his words sources of blessing of which we do not now dream. And to this agree the words of Paul when he says, "Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus unto all generations forever and ever."

When the great cosmic processes cause our present evil social order to go down with a crash, conditions will become so desperate that men will simply be forced to find these new sources of power. Jesus himself said it will be only after earthquakes and wars and terrible commotion that men will see the sign of the Son of man coming in the heavens with power and great glory. We shall realize the absolute indispensableness of Christ

only after the earthquake has destroyed all our sky-scrapers, economic, political, and intellectual. When, in the overthrow of the pagan structures of our pride and greed, we hear the laughter of God at our petty attempts to break the bands of the moral law asunder, and cut away his cords from us, our ears will then be sharpened to hear the added words:

"Yet I have set my king
Upon my holy hill of Zion.
I will tell of the decree:
Jehovah said unto me, Thou art my son;
This day have I begotten thee.
Ask of me, and I will give thee the nations for thine inheritance,
And the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession."

The Form of the Fulfillment Always a Surprise

Jesus himself said that he did not know the day nor the hour, and hence by logical necessity he did not know the scenery and the outward form of the coming. If we do not know when an event is to happen, we are at a loss to paint it with snow on the ground or the freshness of the springtime, or the glory of autumn. And so it is with the coming of Christ. Who in the carboniferous age could have foreseen the cold desolations of the glacial period? And who in the glacial age could have pictured the Mississippi Valley in its present smiling greenness? Or, to come closer still, imagine that George Washington had left a picture of what the

United States would be in a hundred and fifty years. He would have visualized good gravel roads through the forest over which men traveled in fine carriages drawn by thoroughbred horses. He could not have pictured the railroad and automobile and the flying machine. If a man had prophesied the telephone and the telegraph, and told him that his successor could sit in his office at Washington and talk familiarly to the whole nation as they sat around their firesides, such words would have seemed to him like idle dreams. And so it is with us. We cannot picture the scenery of the day of Christ save in the rude symbols of our own times.

But it is important that we construct these symbols. The writer, feeling a certain sense of futility in attempting to interest modern students in Paul's hope of the second coming, sat down before his class one day and began to picture what the second coming of Christ would be like. He knew before he began that his efforts would be laughably inadequate, but as best he could he pictured the ideal day when all the signboards would be free from advertisements, and be filled with the most inspiring art and with words from the sages and poets of the race. He painted a time when the cutthroat competition of modern business and industry would be displaced by universal co-operation. He conceived also of every community being organized into a vast choral society, that every Sunday could give the great oratorios free to the people. He imagined science and manufacture entirely released from the problem of multiplying munitions and devoted to beneficent experi-

ments in agriculture, medicine, and the like. He visualized for a moment the incredible advance that science would surely make under these circumstances, so that every man, even the poorest, should have his airplane, and a radio should be in the humblest home, and the artistic and religious resources of the nation would be devoted to making the broadcasts a rich inspiration to all the people. And thus he went on painting the picture in the framework of modern life. The faces of the young people were radiant, and the reason was simply the fact that the ideal day of Christ's reign was visualized in modern form. Of course that ideal day will be far different, and far more glorious. He had left out the transcendental elements of reunion with all the saints of history. But for the time being it was real to the young people. And this fact suggests that we have need in this day, when the imagination is so tragically stunted, to imitate the ancient sages and paint our modern dreams in vivid colors.

A Vivid Hope of the Coming Always Abundantly Rewarded

But someone says, "What is the use of keeping up such wonderful hopes in view of the fact that the outcome is forever delayed, and is never what is hoped for?" The answer is very simple. All who in the love of Christ have patiently held vast expectations of his coming have had experiences so wonderful and vital as to make their hope burn even brighter in the midst of its literal disappointment. Men who look for Christ eagerly and patiently always receive the Holy Spirit,

and a man in whom the Holy Spirit abides is as inevitably hopeful as a healthy child is eager to play. Furthermore, in the individual life Jesus always does come quickly, and as a rule suddenly. Men are always in the briefest time, if they are found ready, ushered into the ineffable Presence, and made partakers of that glory which the Lord promised to all who love his appearing.

III. Paul's Hope of Personal Immortality

This hope of being quickly ushered into the presence of the Lord was one of Paul's strongest incentives to courage and faithfulness. He believed with a perfect faith that all his struggles and sufferings for the cause would have an eternal reward. He says to the Romans: "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed to us-ward." And to the Corinthians he writes: "Our light affliction, which is for the moment, worketh for us more and more exceedingly an eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal."

The Ground of Paul's Hope

Paul's faith in a future life was hereditary. All Pharisees believed in the resurrection of the dead. But the faith that Paul inherited was fraught with misgivings. These misgivings were especially manifest whenever the sense of God sank to a low level. The resurrection of Christ, however, put the whole question in a

new perspective. When Jesus appeared to Paul on the way to Damascus he knew for certain that the testimony of the apostles concerning the resurrection was true. Christ had risen from the dead. Furthermore, Paul had received the Holy Spirit when, in symbol, he was buried with Christ in baptism and rose again to a new life. The giving of the Spirit Paul conceived to be a divine pledge that the work of redemption which God had begun in him would be completed by his glorification (2 Corinthians 1. 21, 22).

The love of Christ for his disciples was another ground of hope. "If," says Paul, "the dead are not raised, then Christ is not risen." It is inconceivable that Christ would live and reign and leave his faithful, suffering and persecuted followers to sink into nothingness.

Moreover, Paul believed in the resurrection because of what would happen to all idealism and high striving if death were the end of all. It has been well said that not a little of our faith in Christianity comes from the shudder which we get at the thought of what life would be if the gospel were not true. There is a presumption in favor of a belief which, if it were taken away, would cause the finest structures of our common life to collapse. Disproof of the resurrection would make heroic striving futile. "I protest," says Paul, "by that glorying in you, brethren, which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily. If after the manner of men I fought with beasts at Ephesus, what doth it profit me?" What is the use of facing death every day for the truth's sake if there is no truth that lasts, and our idealism is a

delusion? If the dead are not raised, let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die. (1 Corinthians 15. 31, 32.)

Of course the chief root of Paul's perfect confidence in the future was his own daily experience of the constant resurrection of his strength, power, and courage, through faith in Christ. Our inner man, says he, is renewed day by day. Paul had eternal life. His hope was built up in the same way as that of the old Psalmist who exclaimed:

The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places;
Yea, I have a goodly heritage.
I will bless the Lord, who hath given me counsel;
Yea, my heart instructeth me in the night seasons.
I have set the Lord always before me:
Because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.
Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth:
My flesh also shall dwell in safety.
For thou wilt not leave my soul to Sheol;
Neither wilt thou suffer thine holy one to see corruption.
(Psalm 16.)

We often say of sensual joys, "This is too good to last." The psalmist's sense of God had something eternal about it. He exclaimed, "This is too good not to last!" And so Paul, to whom Christ was the supreme reality of experience, closer to him than breathing and nearer than hands and feet, exclaimed, "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle be dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

The Manner of the Resurrection

In answer to the question, "How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come?" Paul says: "There is more than one kind of body. There is the body of beasts adapted to walk on the ground, and a body of fish adapted to swim in the sea, and a body of birds adapted to fly in the air. And so it is reasonable to believe that there is a body adapted to the upper sphere to which a man goes when he leaves his tabernacle of clay. As the seed is transformed through dying in the earth, so man is transformed through death and resurrection."

Of course the mysterious nature of this change Paul would not have pretended fully to understand. Plainly, he was not fighting for some crude theory of the resurrection of the exact chemical constituents of the body that was laid in the grave. Paul was fighting the Greek conception that in the other world disembodied spirits wander about naked and shivering. He was insisting that all that is genial and characteristic of a personality, all that has been developed through the grace of Christ after years of suffering and faithfulness, will be preserved and glorified in the life to come. We *ourselves* will be there. Every characteristic that is worth preserving will remain intact, and yet be transfigured.

The Practical Challenge of the Great Hope

But Paul never had a burning conviction to which he did not hitch a long train of practical consequences. All of Paul's theological beliefs were locomotives. And

so, after establishing the truth of the resurrection he exclaimed, "Wherefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."

As Unamuno suggests, the man who is faithful after such a fashion would make it an injustice for the Supreme Ruler to let him die, and the Supreme Ruler will not allow a mortal successfully to convict him of injustice.

Our minds are weak as well as our bodies, and it is difficult for us to grasp the thought of a great future wherein forever, like little children at Christmas time, we shall discover new wonders that make us hope more and more for wonders in the future. But what a rebuke to our faith are the increasing revelations of astronomy! We instinctively picture an end of things, a limit beyond which there are no more stars; but every time men succeed in casting a new and larger lens it reveals added suns and systems of unimaginable extent and distance. Let us make the revelations of the telescope a symbol of those unsearchable riches in Christ which are to be the field for the wondering exploration of all the sons of God.

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION

When this questionnaire is being used by a class, it may occasionally be found that the questions on some of the chapters are a little too numerous to expect any one student to answer them. In that case they may be divided up among the members of the class as special assignments. It is important, however, whenever possible, that all of the class should have searched out the answer in order to make the classroom discussion more vivacious and interesting. The answers to many of the questions, of course, will be suggested as one reads over the chapter on the subject in this book.

The student, if possible, should have commentaries on the Pauline Epistles. On the whole, *The Abingdon Commentary,* The Abingdon Press, New York; Peake's *Commentary on the Bible,* Nelson, New York; the *One Volume Bible Commentary* edited by Dummelow, Macmillan, New York; or *A New Commentary on the Holy Scripture,* including the Apocrypha, edited by Bishop Core, Macmillan, New York, are to be recommended. It is also very desirable to have one of the modern translations of Paul, such as Weymouth, Goodspeed, or Moffatt. Moffatt is at his best in his translation of the Pauline Epistles. The beginner with Paul finds himself lost as in a jungle, but a little persistence will enable him to get his bearings, and then the apostle will break on him like a sunrise.

I

Utilizing the Advantages of a Providential Background

1. Find illustrations of the advantage to Paul of Roman citizenship, in Acts 16; 22; and 25. 10-12.

2. Where in Acts 21 do we find that Paul found it an advantage to have been brought up in a city whose vernacular was Greek, a language understood throughout the Roman world?

3. Where in Acts 22 do we find that in spite of his birth in a foreign city he had been brought up a very strict Jew? Notice how he uses this, and his training under the famous Jewish rabbi Gamaliel, to win for a little time, at least, the consideration even of a mob.

4. Find in Galatians 1 and Philippians 3 indications that Paul before his conversion was in the habit of carrying out his religious convictions with drastic thoroughness.

5. Find in Romans 7 indication that Paul's attempt to gain merit and moral victory by conformity to an elaborate set of rules had ended in failure.

6. For a picturesque and very interesting portrayal of what must have been Paul's struggles in his efforts to obtain moral victory through the law, see *Paul the Jew,* by the author of *By an Unknown Disciple* (New York, Harper & Brothers).

7. What was it about Jesus and his followers that made Paul feel it his duty to persecute them so fiercely? Luke 6. 6-11; Mark 7. 1-23.

8. Do you imagine it was a pleasure, or a pain, for Paul to persecute the Christians?

9. If Paul had not given his ancestral religion a very thorough and consistent trial, would he have been ready to receive the new revelation of Christ which discarded its merely nationalistic and mechanical elements, and fulfilled and glorified its permanent truths?

10. Are there any other great religious leaders whose absolute confidence in the gospel of free grace and salvation by faith was increased by the fact that they had conscientiously made to the bitter end the experiment of seeking salvation in their own strength and by conformity to rules?

11. Judging from Paul's experience, what would you advise a young man to do who has inherited religious ideals which he begins to fear are mixed with error?

12. Suppose, for instance, a man has inherited the New-Testament idea of the divinity of Christ, and he hears people saying that Jesus was not divine, but only the best man that ever lived. What is the best way to find out the truth about this matter? If Christ is really divine, and a living presence with his disciples, how may a man know it for himself?

13. Paul was without the advantage of being one of the Twelve who followed Jesus and heard his word, and he had been one of the most murderous persecutors of the Christians. Can you think of any reason why he was chosen to be the supreme instrument of God for spreading the gospel over the Roman world?

14. What would you suggest as necessary elements in the education of modern leaders who, whether they will or no, must live a life related most intimately to the life and thinking of nations both in the Orient and Occident that used to occupy only the remotest fringe of our thought?

II

Power Through Responding to the Divine Revelation

1. Where in the Old Testament have we a quaint story that symbolizes the futility of a man's attempt to climb to heaven in his own strength and wisdom? (Genesis 11.)

2. Find in the Gospels an incident where a young man

expected to earn salvation by some exceptional act of devotion and heroism, and Jesus humbled his pride by saying, "None is good save one, even God" (Luke 18).

3. Would Paul have said that he had learned a technique by which he worked himself up into righteousness before God? What technique, however, had Paul learned?

4. Where does Paul proclaim the simplicity and availability of the way of salvation to people who are supposing the road to be distant and devious? (Romans 10.) What parallel to Paul's notion that God is on the search of men do you find in Luke 15?

5. What was there in Paul's response to the vision on the Damascus road that insured that his ideas of Christ would be enlarged and deepened? (Acts 26. 1-23. Compare Luke 8. 18.)

6. What was probably the reason why Paul withdrew into Arabia soon after his conversion? (Galatians 1. 11-17. Compare Matthew 4. 1-11.)

7. Where in Philippians 3 does Paul discount good works as something by which we buy salvation, and yet at the same time tell us of his program of ambitious and strenuous activity?

8. How do you reconcile Paul's idea that we are not saved by works, and the fact that a good Christian is always zealous of good works? (See Ephesians 2. 1-10.)

III

Power Through a Great Conception of Christ

1. How did Paul and the other writers of the New Testament come to their high conception of Christ? Was it a dogma that was imposed upon them from without, or a conclusion to which they came as the result of what they saw and experienced?

2. When Paul acknowledged Jesus to be the Messiah, what did he mean? Compare Isaiah 9 and 11.

3. What made Paul conclude that Jesus was the Messiah?

4. From what carnal elements was Paul's Jewish conception of the Messiah cleansed through the fact that the Lord appeared to him after his death and resurrection?

5. What was it that made Paul speak of Christ as an indwelling Presence in such language as is found in Galatians 2. 20; Ephesians 3. 17, and Colossians 1. 27?

6. What practical advantage to the disciple amid the persecutions and difficulties of life is the conviction that Christ is a living Presence?

7. Have we in the Synoptic Gospels any passages that plainly foreshadow Paul's belief that Christ will abide in the hearts of his disciples and re-enforce them in emergencies? See, for example, Luke 21; Matthew 18 and 28.

8. Is the fourth Gospel in harmony with Paul's belief that Christ through his Spirit abides in the hearts of men? See John 15, and, indeed, the whole upper-room discourse, John 14-17.

9. What was it that made Paul use such language as that contained in Colossians 1. 15-17 and Philippians 3. 21, which asserts the supremacy of Christ over nature? Is this language in harmony with the Gospels? See John 1. 1-3; Matthew 28. 18.

10. Why is it practically important as a dynamic for heroic living to believe that Christ is the Lord of nature?

11. Suppose the language of the New Testament exalting Christ to lordship over creation is not natural to a man. What is the sensible thing for him to do?

12. Might such stories as John 9. 1-12 and John 5. 1-13, where men were healed by Christ without knowing who he was, be taken as a symbol of what often happens in the spiritual realm with those who are willing to make experiments?

13. Has the conception of Christ which a man has inherited from those who are most Christlike in the circle of his acquaintance, a right to the primary place in the hypotheses which he is to test out in the laboratory of life?

SPECIAL ASSIGNMENTS

(*a*) What names did the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews give to Christ?

(*b*) What ascriptions to Christ do you find in the book of Revelation?

(*c*) What evidence have we from the book of Acts that the apostolic church believed that Christ was a living Presence with his disciples? See, for instance, Acts 7. 54-56; 18. 9; 23. 11; 27. 23, 24.

(These references present only one aspect of the evidence. The manifestation of Christ in the so-called commonplace is more important and convincing still.)

IV

LIFE RELEASED BY A SENSE OF FORGIVENESS

The Old-Testament Background

1. In what words does the writer of Psalm 51 state that the ground on which he hopes for forgiveness is the love and grace of God?

2. In what words does the writer of Isaiah 53 express his faith that sinners will be forgiven through some great vicarious sufferer?

The Background in the Gospels

3. In Luke 5. 17-26 what led Jesus to exclaim, Man, thy sins are forgiven thee?

4. In Luke 7. 36-50 what sign does Jesus point to as an evidence that the woman's sins are forgiven?

The Teaching of Paul

5. In Ephesians 2. 1-10 to what does Paul ascribe the change that had brought them out of darkness into light?

6. Why is believing in the love of Christ so much more effective than believing in the love of an ordinary man?

7. Some superficial critics of Paul talk as though he

regarded God as an angry Moloch requiring to be propitiated by bloody sacrifices. What answer to this misrepresentation do you find in 2 Corinthians 5. 18-21; Romans 5. 1-11?

8. Why was Paul's preaching of the cross a stumbling block to the Jews and foolishness to the Greeks?

9. What was it in Paul's lifting up of the cross that caused the burden of men's sins to roll away?

10. What are the two signs that a man's sins are forgiven?

11. Why did Paul use the figure of an animal sacrifice to illustrate Christ's sufferings for the sins of the world?

12. What figures of speech besides those derived from animal sacrifices might be used to convey the thought that it is the suffering love of Christ that brings salvation to men?

13. Is it desirable in preaching salvation through the sufferings of Christ continually to use the biblical figures of speech, or ought we also to express the gospel in figures more close to the experience of the modern man?

14. Why does a man who is honestly serving God constantly need to pray, "Forgive us our trespasses"?

15. To what class will the preaching of forgiveness through the blood of Christ always be offensive?

16. What is the best way to treat a man whose conscience is morbid, and who is tormented by constant self-accusings?

V

Power Through Freedom From Legalism

The Background in the Teaching of Jesus

1. Find in Luke 5 an illustration of the way in which under the influence of Jesus the disciples gave themselves to a glad and joyful life without regard to the rules for fasting that were current among the Jews.

2. Find in Luke 6 an illustration of the way in which the disciples were encouraged by Jesus to break over the Sabbath repressions imposed by the Jews, when their own physical necessities required.

3. Find in Luke 6 an illustration of the way in which Jesus at the risk of his life broke the Sabbath rules of the Jews in order to relieve human suffering.

4. Find instances in Mark 7. 1-21 where Jesus deliberately abrogated some of the taboos of the law of Moses.

5. Where in Matthew 23 does Jesus rebuke the Pharisees for loading the people with burdensome rules?

6. On the other hand, find in Matthew 8 an instance where Jesus commanded a man whom he had healed to observe the Mosaic ceremony when that ceremony happened to be a proper and natural expression of his gratitude for his healing.

Paul's Development of Jesus' Teaching

7. Where in Galatians 5 does Paul exhort the disciples to maintain their freedom from the burden of rules and ceremonies imposed by the Jewish law?

8. Where in Colossians 2 does Paul twice urge the church against allowing themselves to be handcuffed by rules and taboos?

9. What in Paul's experience made him so sure that a man was saved by the free grace of God, and not at the end of a process in which he has earned salvation by performing rites and observing rules? For positive reasons see Acts 9. 1-19; for reasons based on his failure to gain victory through the law, see Romans 7. 7-25.

10. Illustrate the fact that beginning to act as though God were as merciful as Jesus of Nazareth, is the only way of salvation accessible to all men under all circumstances.

11. Why would requiring converts to adopt Jewish national customs have impeded the spread of the gospel? Would it be right to ask converts from savage tribes to adopt European or American customs in addition to a

wholehearted devotion to Christ? Ought they, for instance, to be compelled to wear clothes?

12. Are we saved at first by faith, and then sanctified by good works, or is every forward step to be an act of faith which expresses itself in good works?

13. Illustrate the way in which stressing nonessentials cripples life.

14. What are some of the modern forms of turning the Christian life into mere conformity with external rules and conventions?

15. Illustrate the way in which stressing nonessentials keeps Christians apart. (Galatians 2. 11-13.) Note in Galatians 3 a verse in which Paul very strongly emphasizes the way in which trust in Christ alone for salvation brings all races and classes of men together.

16. Where in Galatians 5 does Paul say that a man who puts the stress on a rite like circumcision has really lost his grip on Christ and his way of saving a man by flooding his soul with a sense of God's love for him?

VI

A Life Whose Mainspring Is Gratitude

1. Where in Psalm 50 is grateful obedience made the one essential requirement?

2. Note that obedience to the Ten Commandments is motivated by gratitude for deliverance from Egypt. Exodus 20. 2.

3. Why does Paul in Romans 12 and Ephesians 5 show that the mainspring of the Christian life should be gratitude?

4. What form should the expression of our gratitude to Christ take? Illustrate from Romans 12 and 1 Corinthians 13.

5. Why does it not narrow a man's life to make love the one and only duty? Romans 13.

6. Why does the duty of limitless love lead to a constantly developing ethics? Philippians 1.

7. Why does love as the one concern of life lead to spontaneity and variety of self-expression? 1 Corinthians 12. Compare John 8. 31, 32.

8. Why is love never superseded by the advancement of knowledge and change of circumstances? 1 Corinthians 13.

9. Review again Paul's passionate protest against putting any burden upon the disciple save that of free, spontaneous love. Colossians 2; Galatians 5.

10. Where in Luke 5 does Jesus show his sense of the danger of attempting to confine the new ethics of free and spontaneous love in old set forms, by a figure of speech that we might today translate into the exhortation, "Do not put a new inner tube into an old, worn-out tire casing"?

11. Why is a man whose only concern is to love always a little shocking to staid religiousness?

12. Why must this freedom to express love in our actions be united with freedom in the phrasing of our beliefs? 1 Corinthians 2.

VII

Power From Crucifying Self

1. Why is it not possible to live a normal and happy life by following all of our spontaneous impulses? Find Paul's answer in Galatians 5.

2. What apparent contradiction in Galatians 5 do we find to Paul's insistence on freedom? What similar contradiction to Jesus' words in Matthew 11. 28-30 about the lightness of his burden, do we find in Matthew 16?

3. What does Paul mean by "the flesh"? When do the natural instincts and desires become "the flesh" in the bad sense in which Paul uses the term?

4. What good things gone wrong do you find in Paul's list of the works of the flesh in Galatians 5?

5. If some medicine were discovered that deadened all those natural impulses which, if uncontrolled, would lead us into sin, would you recommend everyone to take it? If not, why not?

6. Find in Matthew 5 a saying of Jesus which in extreme cases recommends the cutting off of normal pleasures and pursuits where gangrene has set in, and the only alternative is death or amputation. Does Jesus here refer to physical amputation, or is he to be taken in a more spiritual sense?

7. Find in Colossians 2 Paul's attitude toward the tendency to subject the body to unnatural severities and repressions as a regular rule, rather than an occasional necessity in some moral emergency.

8. Why was Paul so opposed to extremes in the way of severity to the flesh?

9. Find in Galatians 5 and 6 Paul's suggestion as to the way to fill up one's life and thus keep the animal instincts under control. (This is the central question of the lesson.) Compare Colossians 3. 5-17.

10. Find in 1 Thessalonians 4. 1-12 passages where Paul proposes love as a way of keeping down the tendency to lust.

11. Find in Ephesians 5 the "sublimation" or spiritual equivalent which Paul proposes for the exhilaration of alcohol.

12. What "sublimation" does Paul in Ephesians 5 propose for the tendency to indulge one's normal love of jollity by jesting that is obscene and silly?

13. Where in Colossians 1 does Paul express his ideal of perfection for the church? Why does Paul always hold up this extremely high ideal before even the rawest converts?

VIII

Power Through Union With the Brotherhood

1. Where in Matthew 18 does Jesus promise a special

manifestation of his presence when disciples meet together in his name?

2. Read carefully and slowly Romans 12. 1-11; Ephesians 4. 1-16; 1 Corinthians 12, noting that they are all expressions of Paul's conception of the church as the body of Christ. What does he mean when he says that the church is the body of Christ? Does he mean that any given organization is the one expression of the mind of Christ in the world, or is the body of Christ the sum total of those who are united with him in spirit and seeking to carry out his will in the world?

3. Paul deemed Christ too great for any one disciple to understand and appreciate. How, according to Ephesians 4. 1-16, is the full revelation of Christ to be made to the world?

4. Men tell us to look to Jesus. How can a man look to Jesus? According to this lesson, is there a way of looking to Jesus besides reading the Gospels and imaginatively visualizing his presence with us?

5. Where in Matthew 25 have we a background in the teaching of Jesus which shows that he regarded ministry to the least of his disciples as a personal service to himself?

6. Where in Ephesians 4 does Paul suggest that when the church is knitted together in harmony so that men of one type will act as a balance for those of the opposite type, it will be preserved from going off on tangents?

7. Would it be possible, according to Paul, for a person to be a spiritual-minded Christian whose name was not on the roll of any Christian organization? Would it be possible for a person to be a spiritual-minded Christian who did not have a passion for co-operation and comradeship with all the followers of Jesus Christ?

8. Would it be possible for a man of enormous insight and brain so to master the essence of Christianity that he might safely dispense with the ministry of his humbler and less gifted fellow Christians?

9. Where does Paul in Romans 12. 1-11, and also in 1 Corinthians 12, say that it is impossible for everyone to exercise all of the gifts of the Spirit?

10. What does Paul mean by a "gift of the Spirit"?

11. Where in 1 Corinthians 12 does Paul warn those who have the more conspicuous and impressive gifts against despising those whose abilities are of a humbler order?

12. Where in 1 Corinthians 12 does Paul urge people whose gifts are not of a conspicuous nature against feeling that they are not an important and essential part of the body of Christ?

13. Where in 1 Corinthians 12-14 does Paul suggest, without definitely stating it, that the best way to develop one's talent, and, indeed, to find it, is fervently to love our fellow men?

14. Paul plainly states that all are not called upon to be apostles or prophets or teachers; but according to 1 Corinthians 13 what grace is everyone called upon to manifest?

15. Where in 1 Corinthians 13 and 14 does Paul say that however unusually gifted we may be, unless we unselfishly love our fellow men, our brilliance will be of no avail?

16. Where in 1 Corinthians 13 and 14 does Paul suggest that it is possible for a man to be very self-denying and heroic without having true sympathy and love for his fellow men?

17. Where in 1 Corinthians 13 does he say that a man might conceivably be prodigally liberal with his money, and yet lack unselfish love for the brotherhood?

18. In 2 Corinthians 8 and 9 Paul is seeking to encourage the Gentile churches to share their earthly goods with the boycotted Hebrew Christians in Jerusalem. Where in chapter 8 do we find a passage that considers this habit of sharing with the needy a normal aspect of the church life?

IX

Power Through Definiteness of Task

1. Paul's conviction that men are especially selected by Christ for apostolic tasks is founded on the gospel records. Find indications of this in Luke 6 and Matthew 16.

2. Paul deemed himself called to preach to the Gentiles. Find indications in Matthew 8. 1-13 and 22. 1-14 that Jesus foresaw the carrying of his gospel to the Gentiles.

3. Paul became the greatest of the apostles. Where in Mark 10 does Jesus suggest that some who like Paul are called last will be equal in power and privilege to those who are called first?

4. Find in Galatians 1 an assertion by Paul that he was born with aptitudes for the adventurous and pioneering work of an apostle.

5. Find in Acts 22 and 13 records of spiritual experiences that convinced Paul that he was set apart as a pioneer missionary to the Gentiles.

6. What in Paul's background contributed to his equipment as an apostle to the non-Jewish peoples of the empire? Did the other apostles deem themselves as well fitted for the task as Paul? See Galatians 2. 7-9.

7. What experiences of special success in reaching Gentiles must have re-enforced Paul's conviction that preaching to Gentiles was his providential task? See, for example, Acts 19. 1-21.

8. What practical advantage was it to Paul to have this settled conviction that God had planned from his birth that he should give his whole energy to evangelizing the pagan peoples of the empire?

9. Some men who feel called to a great task do not have time to give elaborate attention to individuals. Was this true of Paul?

(*a*) What indication that Paul treated each case like a physician or a nurse do we find in 1 Thessalonians 1?

(*b*) What indication do we find in Romans 16 that Paul dealt not with the mass, but with the individual?

(*c*) What proof of the personal, man-to-man, character of Paul's work in Ephesus do we find in his farewell address to the Ephesian elders? (Acts 20.)

10. What effect does Paul's concentration upon actual men, with all their complex natures, have upon his own thinking? How would it affect his power over others?

11. In this policy of seeking to accomplish his world-wide task by giving abundant time to personal conversation with individuals, did Paul have back of him the example of Jesus? Glance through Luke's Gospel to get an impression of the proportion of our Lord's time that was devoted to hand-to-hand dealing with individuals.

X

Power Through Prayer

1. Find in Luke 11 a parable that shows that Paul's faith in intercessory prayer had back of it the teaching of Jesus. See also another similar parable in Luke 18.

2. Assuming that Paul would not lay a burden upon immature Christians which he did not carry himself, what light have we in Ephesians 6 on the question as to whether Paul's prayers included the whole circle of his fellow Christians? See also Ephesians 1. 15, 16.

3. Examine the opening chapter of a number of Paul's Epistles to note that he was constantly giving thanks for the good qualities of his converts in the various churches.

4. Find in Philippians 1 and Ephesians 3 indications of the nature of the blessings which Paul sought in prayer for his disciples.

5. Do we get from Paul's letters the impression that his life of constant thanksgiving and prayer for his friends throughout the world was a life of superreligious strain, or was it spontaneous and joyful?

6. What light do you find in Philippians 4 on the ques-

tion as to whether Paul would have deemed it trifling with the Almighty to pray about every small thing that came into his life?

7. What indication do we find in Philippians 4 of the power of prayer to allay anxiety?

8. Did Paul, however, regard prayer simply as a mental gymnastic to work ourselves up into a fine mood, or did he expect it also by the grace of God to accomplish things in the lives of those from whom we are so separated that we cannot go to them in personal ministry?

9. What results of Paul's ministry go to show that his prayers were far more than a means of working himself up into a pleasing spiritual glow?

10. What did Jesus think about the power of prayer to accomplish more than the healthy glow that comes from practicing a spiritual gymnastic? Find a passage on this subject in Luke 17.

11. What indications do we find in 2 Corinthians 12 that sometimes Paul's prayers were answered by special grace to endure an affliction rather than by its removal?

12. If Paul's thorn in the flesh had been removed, would his influence in the world have been greater or less? What if Jesus through his prayer in Gethsemane had been delivered from the cross?

XI

Making Handicaps a Stepping-Stone to Power

1. Paul believed that poverty, affliction, and persecution could be turned into a means of grace. Find statements in Matthew 5 and Luke 6 that show that Jesus was back of him in this conviction.

2. Did Paul regard the mischances that came to him as all ordained by God, or did he take the position that whatever calamity befell him, if he only held to the love of God, it would finally be worked out for his good? See

1 Thessalonians 2. 18; 2 Corinthians 4. 16-18; Romans 8. 28.

3. Find indications in 2 Corinthians 1, 4 and 12, that in Paul's own experience his afflictions had driven him to sources of power through which he became a fountain of life to others.

4. Find in 2 Corinthians 6 indications that Paul felt it needful for the preacher to suffer for the cause in order to make the world sure of his sincerity and sure also that his gospel gave power to rise above the difficulties of life. Compare Colossians 1. 24.

5. What adroit use of a perilous situation for the preaching of the gospel do we find in Acts 20, 21, and 26?

6. In Philippians 4. 10-20 Paul says, "I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therein to be content." What does he mean by this? Compare the discontent expressed in Philippians 3. 12-14.

7. Where in 2 Corinthians 4 and Romans 8 do we find that Paul, having gained grace through his sufferings, believed that he would also gain glory?

8. Where in Colossians 2 do we note that Paul, while he rejoiced in his sufferings for them (1. 24), disapproved any self-imposed severity to the body with the idea of gaining merit thereby?

9. Judging from the account of what Paul endured in 2 Corinthians 11. 23-29, and his later sufferings recorded in Acts 21. 23; 28. 31, would the fact that he survived it all indicate that he did, or did not, take good care of his health?

XII

The Dynamic of a Great Hope

The Coming of Christ

1. Find passages in Luke 12 where Jesus challenges men to alert faithfulness in view of his sudden coming in judg-

ment. (There are many other passages, as, for example, Luke 17. 22-37; Luke 21; Matthew 24 and 25.)

2. In view of the fact that Paul believed that the living Christ was with him at all times, what could he have meant by his future return?

3. Did Jesus when he first came fulfill the letter or the spiritual aspects of the Old Testament Messianic prophecies? Compare the lowly carpenter Christ with the Messiah predicted in Isaiah 9. 6, 7; 11. 1-5; and especially Psalm 72.

4. Are we to insist that Christ's return shall be in the precise form in which Paul visualized it, or are we to put the stress on the hope that all men, good and bad, will in time be overwhelmed with the certainty of his divine presence and his supremacy in human life?

5. What form of expectation of Christ's coming is more natural to modern minds accustomed to the atmosphere of an age of science?

6. Is it likely that our modern hope will be fulfilled in the form in which we visualize it, or are we to expect amazing and unforeseen developments? Does history give us warrant for that expectation?

7. What is it that makes men keep on hoping so confidently in view of the fact that the coming has been delayed, and the outcome is always so different from what has been expected?

The Hope of Eternal Life

8. Where in Matthew 5 are men exhorted to courage amid persecutions by a promise of great rewards in heaven?

9. Where does Jesus in Matthew 25 and Luke 16 warn men against selfishness by pointing out its evil consequences in the next world as contrasted with the blessedness of the righteous?

10. What are the reasons which Paul in 1 Corinthians 15 gives for his confidence in a future life?

11. Where in 2 Corinthians 5 does Paul suggest that the gift of the Spirit is a kind of pledge or earnest that God will preserve us unto eternal life?

12. On what did Paul chiefly base his hope of eternal life?

13. Find in 1 Corinthians 15 a verse where Paul bases a very practical exhortation on his confidence in the resurrection of the believer. Compare 2 Corinthians 4. 16 to 5. 10.

14. When men decide there is no resurrection, what kind of a life are they apt to live? (1 Corinthians 15.)

Special Assignments

1. Search Romans 2, 5, 6, and 8, for heartening references to the future reward of the righteous.

2. Read 2 Corinthians 4 and 5 in search of passages showing the inspiration and challenge which Paul derived from a hope of immortality.

3. Read the Epistle to the Philippians in search of passages showing how Paul's mind was lightened by his great hope of coming glory in Christ.

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